

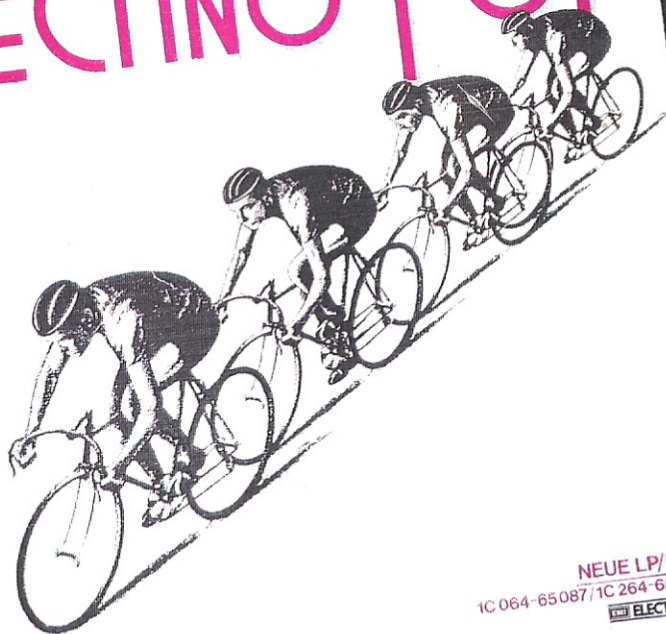
AKTIVITÄT

ISSUE N° 7 • SEPTEMBER 1995

THE K-FILES

Es wird immer weitergeh'n –
Musik als Träger von Ideen

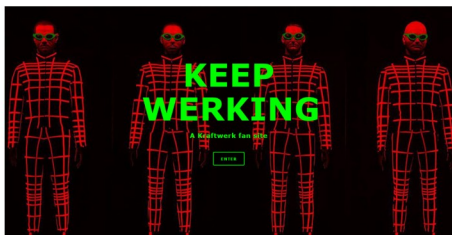
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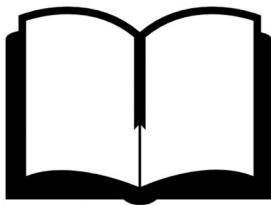
K R A F T W E R K F A N Z I N E

This document contains the scanned pages of one of the Kraftwerk Aktivität Fanzines or complimentary publications that were produced from 1992 through to 1998.

During this time 10 Fanzines were published along with various update issues and other complimentary publications.

The scans have only been altered for clarity, with the exception of addresses and phone numbers that have now been blocked out. So please note that all errors and miss-information are as they appeared at the time of publication. Later issues tried to address the earlier problems as the production team put more stringent editorial practices in place.

Best viewed with two pages side-by-side





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AKTIVITÄT IS AN UNOFFICIAL
FANZINE PROVIDING NEWS ON THE
OUTPUT OF KRAFTWERK AND
RELATED ARTISTS. PRODUCED BY
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Since issue 6 appeared in August of last year, there has been no new material or live appearances by Kraftwerk. There was some interest last November when it looked as if a new release of 'Tour De France' was to be issued on CD in Germany, but the release date came and went with no appearance and it has not been rescheduled. (See 'K Files' article, page 41, for more info.)

So, exactly what are Kraftwerk's current activities and plans you may well ask? Well, being an unofficial fanzine having no contact with Kraftwerk, we're not exactly the best to ask really. The last year and a half or so has been a particularly quiet time, even measured against Kraftwerk's rather sedate visible workrate. However, there has been a very slight sign of change recently; the October issue of Q magazine features this very short, but in Kraftwerk news terms very significant, piece of info;

'Oxygen efficient humanoid Ralf Hutter spent his summer hols on his bike following the Tour De France from start to finish. The Kraftwerkian spirit of Man and Machine in perfect harmony may have been evoked on the road but they haven't invoked it much in the studio in recent years. This may be changing as the band have informed their record company, EMI, that they should prime their circuits for a new Kraftwerk album sometime in '96.'

This appears to be the closest that Kraftwerk themselves have come in quite some time to announcing the release of any new material. Now then, I wouldn't go presuming this will actually happen - remember, 'Technopop' was actually given a release date, catalogue number, sleeve design etc., before it was scrapped - all we have here is a vague promise of something next year. But it is at least a statement that comes from Kraftwerk, so there is every reason to take it seriously, as opposed to the ever circling rumours that we Kraftwerk fans are always hearing, talking of which...

Apart from the rumour of the release of a new album, the other ever present is the release of 'The Mix 2'. A rather clumsy hoax on the Internet at the end of last year merely added to the confusion. I have no doubt whatsoever that Kraftwerk will have enough material (at least) already recorded to fill up another CD of 'The Mix'-like proportions. (Think of it, they play 'Numbers', 'Computer World', 'Tour De France', 'The Model', 'The Man Machine' live, they must be in recorded form already, and a new 'Neon Lights' was left off of 'The Mix' itself, enough for a single album anyway.) The question is of course, would they want to actually release such a recording? Unfortunately, it's a 'cry wolf' situation; there have been so many rumoured release dates for a 'Mix 2' that most fans will need to have a copy in front of them before they will believe it now.

Rumour also suggests that EMI UK have been planning an official DJ remix collection, having put out feelers on such a project. Once again, we're dealing with rumours with no hard and fast proof though. Certainly, EMI have been building up Kraftwerk's profile again, with the high-profile CD re-issues earlier this year.

The bottom line is of course that Kraftwerk's plans remain as closely guarded as ever. It seems certain, judging by answers in interviews and from other sources, that Kraftwerk will not release any new 'produkt' unless they feel that it is sufficiently unique to warrant attention and not merely adding to the ever increasing glut of music readily available. Yet, there is every indication that Kraftwerk still continue their almost religious daily schedule of work at Kling Klang studio, quotes from many sources confirm this as a fact. Perhaps the quote from Q magazine is a pointer to better things.

While there still remains no further new releases there have however been some re-issues of older material, in the UK and also in Japan.

- **EMI Re-issues;** EMI United Kingdom re-issued seven Kraftwerk albums on CD format, three in August and four back in April; *'Radioactivity'* (CEMS 1524), *'The Man Machine'* (CEMS 1520), *'Computer World'* (CEMS 1547) and *'The Mix'* (CEMS 1548) appeared in mid-April to a significant media welcome, most music journals, in the UK at least *Q*, *Future Music*, *Vox*, *NME*, etc, even *'The Guardian'*, carrying retrospective overviews of this re-issued produkt, fairly unanimous in appreciation. The first two CD's are at budget price while the latter appear at full price. Sadly, the re-issued *'Autobahn'* and *'Electric Cafe'* CDs spotted thus far are also at full price.

The packaging for *'Computer World'* is pretty much as per the American CD issue, which has some variations from the German packaging (which was a faithful reproduction of the original LP artwork style.) The other CD's appear to have altered little in comparison to previous CD issues, with *'Radioactivity'* more akin to the Dutch pressing that has been more commonly available over the past few years. *'The Man Machine'* and *'The Mix'* have only minor changes, of little significance. A half page full colour advert appeared in the May issue of *Q* too. There was even a review/retrospective piece on BBC Radio 4's *'Kaleidoscope'* programme, the Thursday 13th April edition.

In August the three remaining CD's in this re-issue drive were due to appear; *'Electric Cafe'* (CEM 1346), *'Autobahn'* (CDP 7461532) and *'Trans-Europe Express'* (CDP 7454732). *'Electric Cafe'* has been altered very slightly and I haven't as yet seen the 'TEE' one. The *'Autobahn'* CD's that have appeared on the shelves again are exactly as per the earlier release - even down to the German EMI-Electrola logo. Can it be that this is the re-issue? Surely not?

The question is ... what happened to the bands Vertigo-era albums? The Germanofon label releases of this material still remain on sale in large megastores and the like, despite their dubious quality/legality. Surely it



'KRAFTWERK' BY PASCAL BUSSY
GERMAN LANGUAGE EDITION BOOK



'TOCCATA ELECTRONICA' BOOTLEG CD



'TOUR DE TRANCE' BOOTLEG CD

would be a good opportunity to do things right with decent, official re-releases, mastered from the original tapes, not a vinyl LP copy?! As yet, there has been no response from EMI records to whether the Germanophon releases are illegal or not and whether they will include these early albums in their ongoing re-issue schedule. The record stores involved, when questioned, reiterate that they only deal with legitimate, not bootleg, suppliers.

• **Japanese re-issues;** There have been some CD's re-issued in Japan too, the three Capitol-era albums; *'Radioactivity'* has been re-issued on the Greenline subsidiary of Capitol/Toshiba-EMI (CP 28-1010 / CDP 7 46474 2) at a price of 2800 Yen (approx. a little over £20) while *'Trans-Europe Express'* (CP 21-6024 / CDP- 7 46473 3) and *'The Man Machine'* (CP 21 6045 / CCM-46039) are on the Past Masters label of Capitol/Toshiba-EMI priced at a more reasonable 1970 Yen (approx. a little over £14). Each of these CDs also contain an additional sheet in Japanese with info on the band/release. Like the UK, there may be more on the way.

• **Pascal Bussy's biography of Kraftwerk** appeared in a German language edition, in early July. Now titled *'Kraftwerk'*, with a subtitle of *'Synthesizer, Sounds und Samples - die ungewöhnliche Karrier einer deutschen Band'*, it is published by Piper Schott, translated by Ingeborg Schober. In paperback form, the book jacket features a totally different design, with a full colour pic of Kraftwerk from their German TV appearance for 'The Model', set against a blue background. The book sells at Dm 19.90. ISBN No.; 3-492-18408-1.

• **Trancewerk Express Vol.1 (A Tribute To Kraftwerk)** is the title of a CD released by the American label Hypnotic, a division of Cleopatra records, who have been responsible for numerous repackagings of Kraftwerk's Capitol-era material in the USA (More about that later...). This CD features a number of acts covering Kraftwerk tracks; 'Music Non Stop' by Exis 01, 'The Robots' by Teler's, 'Home Computer' and 'Trans Europe Express' by Audio Science, 'Metropolis' by Reverse Pulse Envelope, 'Electric Cafe' by Purttiv J, 'Computer World' by Meedom & Wind, 'Radioactivity' by Ultravision, 'Autobahn' by Kirk and finally 'The Model' by Ikon. The catalogue number is CLEO 9605-2. Haven't heard it as yet, so can't give any idea of what it's like.

• **Bootleg CD's;** Although there has been no official Kraftwerk activity, there have been the inevitable unofficial CD releases. *'Toccata Electronica'* appeared in April and features a selection of vinyl-only releases and other mixes from bootleg CD's. Track details are thus; 'Computer World' (Robotron Mix)(5.48), 'Tour De France' (1983 Kevorkian Extended 12" Mix)(6.48)(really the 1984 remix), 'Technopop' (1983 Version)(4.37), 'Metropolis' (Live, Utrecht, 1981)(5.35), 'The Model' (Cat-Bonic Mix)(5.17), 'Neon Lights' (Ton-Up Mix)(5.23), 'Pocket Calculator' (East-West-Mix)(5.20), †'Zehn Kleine Negerlein'(4.46), 'Radioactivity' (Kevorkian 12" Remix)(7.26), 'Die Roboter' (Special German Kling Klang Mix)(3.45) (really the 7" single version from 1991), 'Les Mannequins' (Orig. '78 French Ext. Remix)(6.04) (really the French LP version, 1977), 'Dentaku' (Orig '81 Ext. Remix)(5.00) (really the normal Japanese album version), 'Tour De France' (Orig. '83 German Kling Klang Version)(6.45) (is actually the 1984 remix!), ‡'Stratovarius' (Live, Bremen, 27/6/71)(5.38) (really 'Rückstoss Gondoliere', not 'Stratovarius'.). Of note; † the track 'Zehn Kleine Negerlein' is not a Kraftwerk track, it is actually from a German techno band and is a cover of a German children's song, of dubious taste in this setting, originating from the turn of the century.

The other bootleg CD that has appeared is called *'Tour De Trance'*. Once again, this is a mixture of previously issued DJ mixes and some even more desperate, non-Kraftwerk items (marked thus; †). Approach with caution - some of this is definitely not Kraftwerk, merely featuring some samples of them. Track listing is; 'The Robots' (Ultimix), 'Tour De Breaks', 'Call Me On The Telephone' Remix, 'Powerwork Megamix', 'Body Six Remix'†, German Kraft Mix, 'The Model' (Tour De Trance Remix), 'Robocop 2' (allegedly by Wolfgang Flür), 'Techno Crash'†, 'Moderne Kompositionen'†. The *'Bootleg CD guide'* mini-issue, first mentioned tentatively in issue 6, appeared, in April. This mini-issue is 23 pages in length (plus cover) and it covers all the then known bootleg CD releases released up to that point. It costs £1.25 + A5 SAE. (For outside UK, see separate sheet.)

• **A CD-ROM, 'Best Of German Rock Vol.1'** has been released in Switzerland. It contains a MIDI version of 'The Model' (not Kraftwerk), a biography, a discography and 27 (very dark) concert photos from 1981. The booklet claims that the photos are previously unreleased. The compilation contains various other German acts -there is a biography, discography and one piece of music for each act and there are a total of 450 concert photos. Price, Dm 49.80.

• *Q magazine*. The October issue of Q (available late August) comes complete with a free cover-mounted cassette called 'Drive!' which features material from a wide variety of EMI recording artists, Kraftwerk amongst them. Despite the obvious motoring theme to the whole idea, 'The Model' has been chosen in preference to the more obvious motorway ambience that 'Autobahn' provides.

• *Cover version* Earlier in the year a cover version of 'Computer Love' by a band called Slipstream came to light. More of a guitar arrangement, not bad nonetheless. Their album 'Slipstream' contains ten tracks and the Kraftwerk theme continues on track 10, 'She Passes By', with some of 'Autobahn's' chords sneaking in.

• *Zenith magazine* In the news pages of the last issue we mentioned that issue 4 of the electronic music magazine Zenith would appear in September of last year, complete with an interview with ex-Kraftwerk member Klaus Dinger. Due to various workload commitments amongst the members of the Zenith editorial team, this issue has not as yet appeared and is still unlikely to do so for some time yet. Unfortunately, it now seems that the interview with Klaus Dinger will not be appearing after all. (Zenith, 82 Burnley Lane, Chadderton, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL1 2PW)

BBC RADIO 1 FM DOCUMENTARY

BBC Radio 1 FM are currently putting together an hour-long documentary on Kraftwerk to be broadcast later this year. The following press release will tell you all you need to know about it;

'I am happy to announce that Kraftwerk are at last to be the subject of a BBC Radio 1 FM documentary. This much over-due programme is to be broadcast on Sunday December 10th between 7pm and 8pm, straight after the UK Top 40.

The programme includes a new interview with Karl Bartos plus rare material from previous interviews with Ralf Hütter. (Possible interviews also from Wolfgang Flür and Emil Schult - to be confirmed). OMD's Andy McCluskey talks about his personal contact with the band and the huge influence they've had on his career.

Other highlights of the show include music journalist Simon Witter's memories of clubbing in London with Ralf, Paul Allesandrini's anecdotes of his friendship with Kraftwerk and their time in Paris, David Bowie's response when he was asked the first thing that came into his head when he heard the word 'Kraftwerk' and in return, Karl Bartos giving an improvised rendition of Bowie's 'Heroes'. As you can imagine, there will be lots of people singing Kraftwerk's praise from Ultravox's Midge Ure to Kraftwerk biographer Pascal Bussy. There's also an interview with Aktivität's Paul Wilkinson.

Of course, there'll also be lots of Kraftwerk's music as well.

So, tune in on December 10th at 7pm to hear the documentary 'Kraftwerk - Man Or Machine?'.

Laura Druce, Producer, BBC Radio 1 FM, 21.8.95



DIE DOMINAS - 'ICH BIN A DOMINA' SINGLE



1975 UK TOUR ADVERT



BEST OF GERMAN ROCK - CD-ROM

The article covering the extremely rare single by *Die Dominas* in issue 6 quoted extensively from an interview with Manuel Götsching that originally appeared in 'Dreams Word' fanzine. Unknown to me at the time was the fact that the interview was actually done by Gilles Garneau, one of Aktivität's regular readers for quite some time now, so I am pleased to acknowledge this. Gilles has sent a photocopy of the 10" single's cover, which is reproduced here, so we can now all see the Kraftwerk point of interest, the sleeve design, of the release.

1975 UK TOUR (ISSUE 3)

Back in issue 3 (January 1993) we printed a short article about Kraftwerk's 1975 UK tour and listed the dates of this. This article was culled from a number of sources. We have now come by a full page press advert from September 1975, supplied by José García which indicates that there are a few more dates to add to those printed in issue 3; *19th September; Yeovil, Johnson Hall; 22nd September; Bristol, Colston Hall*. The original article listed a date at the Pavillion in Bath on the 18th of September; this date is not listed in the press advert but may have been added at a later date.

Other corrections; also in issue three in one of the 'Did You Know?' articles, it was stated that 'Ralf Hutter played keyboard on a single by a band called Red Lipstique, back in 1982'. It turns out that there is no truth in this at all, apologies to any reader who has actually bought this record on the strength of this.

ELEKTRIC MUSIC

Since the release of AKTIVITÄT 6, the only signs of life from Elektrik Music was an appearance on a German daytime-TV programme, *'Mittwoch Live'*, back in September of 1994. They performed three tracks in total, two of them new and as yet unreleased; *'TV'*, *'State Of The Art'* and *'Solar Constitution'*. The line-up for this appearance was Lothar Manteuffel (Vocals), Ralf Beck (Synth) and Emil Schult (Videos). Karl Bartos was not present.

It is now well known that Karl Bartos has played a prominent role in the recording of the new album by Electronic. The May 1995 issue of *'Total Guitar'* magazine features an extensive interview with Johnny Marr, one half of the band. Or should that be one third? Answering the first question of the interview, Johnny reveals; "...We've got a new band member, Karl Bartos from Kraftwerk". The album is not expected to be released until early 1996, though there are to be two singles released this year, so these may well reveal the extent of Karl Bartos' involvement.

Lothar Manteuffel has been composing various forms of music for the German TV channel VH-1. He's also been working with Emil Schult in producing a documentary for the Eurosolar project. Lothar supplied the music. *Ralf Beck* is currently producing bands in his own Düsseldorf studio. *Emil Schult* has recently been touring with his exhibition *'TV'* and another one called *'Solar Planets'*, which included a stop at Düsseldorf. The *'TV'* exhibition has several designs like the test-card logo used for Elektrik Music's single of the same name.

'Japanese import' copies of the *'Esperanto'* CD spotted in Amsterdam record store(s) turn out to be merely German copies with the addition of a wrapped around title strip, like Japanese issues, confirming that there was no proper Japanese release of this CD. The CD is now available at budget price in Germany.

WOLFGANG FLÜR

Wolfgang Flür has been working with his new band, *Yamo*. He has also been writing a book of his memories and will hopefully have this book published. The exclusive interview with Wolfgang Flür further on in this issue will bring you up to date with his activities. Most recently, Wolfgang Flür has also contributed drums for the band Mouse On Mars on one of the tracks (*'Stereomission'*) on their latest CD, *'Iaora Tahiti'* (Too Pure, Pure(CD)48) (UK) / Rough Trade, RTD 121.3087.2 (Germany)).

CARRY ON CLEO...

The American labels Cleopatra/CEMA Special Markets seem to be trying to repackage what limited amounts of Kraftwerk material they have the rights to in as many permutations as possible. Thus far, we have had two re-issues of 'Radioactivity' on CD (one of these with altered, re-coloured packaging to differentiate it from other releases), 'Trans-Europe Express' and

'The Man Machine' CD's (both in new, re-designed sleeves), two compilation CD's ('The Model' and 'Showroom Dummies'), a budget-price re-issue of one of these ('The Model') in another totally redesigned sleeve, budget price re-issues of the three Capitol LP's, on vinyl surprisingly (and with the original sleeve designs!) and most recently, to top it all off, a box set ('The Capitol Years') featuring the three CD's 'Radioactivity', 'Trans-Europe Express' and 'The Man Machine' once again.

This box set seems to have been the final straw for many fans. The initial re-issues of the CD's caused some concern, with the wholesale re-designing of the packaging. The intention may have been to bring things up to date with a more modern layout and certainly the inclusion of lyrics, additional pics and sleeve notes are more often than not welcomed by collectors and newer fans alike. But many of the older fans expressed disquiet with the extent of the repackaging, especially with 'The Man Machine', which neutered the deliberate constructivist artwork/image fostered by the original, a Kraftwerk-dictated design remember. The box set CD just seems to be an exercise in repackaging what you may well already have and paying for it all over again.

And it isn't cheap for this 'privilege' either! The average price it appears to sell for in the larger stores seems to be £42-45. What do you get for your money then? Well, it's not a particularly lavish box set; with the case housing the three CD's in a tray each (one a double the other a single) this means that you do not get the full CD packaging that the re-issues available separately come with. What you do get is a 40+ page booklet with extensive text on the electronic music scene and Kraftwerk's part thereof. (Sadly, the booklet is pretty well bereft of photos), a poster with reproductions of the CD covers (the nearest this package comes to including them) and a sticker! - featuring the 'Radioactivity' design.

But that's not all. Cleopatra have put together a couple of 'book with accompanying CD' packages documenting various musical areas with pertinence to Kraftwerk. Firstly there is 'Industrial Revolution' (ISBN 0-96361-93-0-6) by Dave Thomson (who penned the liner notes to the re-issued Cleopatra CD's) and a double CD, also called 'Industrial Revolution' (Cleopatra, CLEO 7771) both of which have been available for some time now. The double CD features one Kraftwerk track, 'Metal On Metal'. Described thus; *'Everything you ever wanted to know about industrial music. From Kraftwerk to Throbbing Gristle to Ministry it's all here. Illustrated with many exclusive photographs. Companion 2-CD set contains 24 tracks featuring Ministry, Electric Hell Fire Club, Psychic TV, Leather Strip.'*

Following on from this another book/CD package called 'Space Daze', again written by Dave Thomson. Billed as *'the history and mystery of electronic ambient space rock'*, the subjects vary between Tangerine Dream, Hawkwind, Syd Barrett, Brian Eno, Coil etc and of course Kraftwerk. The book focuses more on the earlier part of Kraftwerk's history, which is in contrast to the accompanying CD which features 'Spacelab' as its chosen track. The CD catalogue number is CLEO 79162. The insides of the book feature a few early pics of Kraftwerk, mainly culled from early LP sleeves.

Some other points worth making about the re-issued version of 'The Model'; the sleeve credits the version of 'Showroom Dummies' as a 'single edit', but it is in fact the full length LP mix to be found, as per the original release of this CD. Additionally, if you remove the grey CD tray you will find that there is additional artwork, which makes a big difference if you find a clear CD tray to use instead. Of course, the most recent Cleopatra/Kraftwerk-related item is the 'Trance-Werk Express Vol.1' cover versions CD.

UPDATE - 1981 TOUR DATES (ISSUE 6)

We carried a list of the 1981 tour dates in the last issue. It was pointed out at the time that we had reservations about how accurate this list was and this has proved to be well founded, as there a number of inaccuracies. Unfortunately, there is still a certain vagueness about some of the dates, principally the American leg of the tour, so it is not possible to compile a fully updated list as yet. In addition, the German leg of the tour towards the end of 1981 was subject to major re-organisation, due in part to poor ticket sales; some dates moved to smaller venues, some cancelled altogether, so there are a number of inaccuracies there too. As the list is still somewhat incomplete I have elected not to include it once again in this issue. As more info becomes known it is hoped to compile an accurate list of the dates in the future.

News items contributed by: Paul Wilkinson, Gunther Pöcker, Klaus Zäpke, Wil Walker, José García Corral, David Woodward, Gilles Garneau, Mike Pitt, John Shilcock, Ian Calder.

The following article is a rare, exclusive interview with Emil Schult, for Aktivität. I would like to thank Emil for taking the time and allowing me to conduct the following interview, which took place during September 1994.

The Emil Schult Interview

Conducted by Paul Wilkinson, September 1994 - an Aktivität exclusive

Paul Wilkinson: *Tell me how you joined Kraftwerk in the early 1970's.*

Emil Schult: As far as I can remember, Florian needed a violin bow for a concert when he invited me over to come and see their studio, which looked familiar to the photo on the back of the 'Ralf and Florian' album. I've known Ralf and Florian since then.

In the early days, why did the line-up of Kraftwerk change so much?

It was the desire to find a group which was able to realise the ideas of music and art that made Kraftwerk so unique.

In the early days, I believe you played live with Kraftwerk?

In the early days I was more interested in building electronic devices to perform certain sounds. Florian gave me an electric guitar on which I fitted a small transmitter, we called it 'die funkgitarré'.

Why did you, with Ralf and Florian, produce the 'musicomix' comic insert that accompanied 'Ralf & Florian'?

Ralf and Florian gave me the chance to perform some of my craft, they also liked to do little drawings.

How did you write such songs as 'Autobahn' and 'The Model'?

Mostly with pens and little pieces of paper, after we discussed themes together.

The 'Autobahn' album cover has a painting by yourself, why did you paint it?

Ralf and Florian supervised my art for the sleeve, we thought it was 'state of the art'.

How did yourself and Kraftwerk cope with your sudden shot to stardom?

I felt a slight tickle in my stomach and very confident to do more good things.

The picture on the inner sleeve of 'TEE', the round the table' picture, was painted by you. How did this come about?

The picture is a collage of a Maxfield Parrish painting, a photo and my airbrush art.

You went on tour with Kraftwerk in 1981. Tell me a little about it.

I was on tour with the usual tasks and trying to figure out new concepts, like 'Technopop', in the Bullet train while going through Japan.

By the time of 'Electric Cafe', what was your role with Kraftwerk?

I arranged the pre-designed sleeve.

What was life like in the Bahamas when you lived there? I believe you lived next door to Robert Palmer, Wallay Badarou as well as Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth (both of Talking Heads fame).

As you say, it was a creative neighbourhood, which still lasts, although all of us are in different countries now.

What is your relationship with Ralf and Florian now?

I see Ralf more often than Florian and it is still exciting to meet.

Can you tell me about your version of 'The Mix' album sleeve?

It was all mixed together, like the title says, all Kraftwerk icons.

You have produced some of the Kraftwerk promo-videos, including 'Pocket Calculator'?

Ralf and I spent a couple of hours together in a video post-production studio in London, where we applied a few electronic effects to the video, which had previously been recorded at a concert in Hamburg.

Why did you design the banks of neon lights, which are still used in the most recent Kraftwerk concerts?

That was an idea that came out of the band and how we felt the stagelight should look. It goes way back to the concept of 'Ralf and Florian'.

How did you become involved with Elektric Music ?

Through my long time acquaintance with Lothar and Karl.

When did you first meet Lothar and Karl?

Lothar was a student at the school where I taught in 1974, and when Karl joined Kraftwerk in 1974.

Why are you accompanying Elektric Music on their recent tours?

I hope this way I can help to realise some of the new aspects in art of music.

How do you decide what you are going to show on the screen at an Elektric Music concert?

I'm trying to interpret a common mood in order to boost consciousness, to open up for appropriate human development into the future, free of pain to share the blessing of this world with all species.

Besides writing, painting, drawing did you do anything else in your days with Kraftwerk?

Have a good time with my family and my friends, mostly outside, walking through the countryside.

Can you tell me about your exhibition, called 'Colour Compositions and Underwater Motifs'?

It was an exhibition designed for the last great museums of this world, our oceans underwater, with pristine forms of life and the calls to my fellow humans not to destroy this foundation of our existence.

Describe to me your latest project, featuring suns.

Eurosolar commissioned to me the design of the first European solar prize. We built a heliograph out of glass marble and bronze, which will be awarded to people, countries and communities in seven European countries. People who contribute in the field of regenerative energies and technologies thereof. Also Lothar contributed with music and a video.

I believe you wrote a book, back in 1982, with Lothar, called 'Spiele mit der Kunst - Kunst Spiele'. What was the book all about?

That was a book to inspire students and teachers to do certain projects with the goal to enhance their skills in the arts.

Can you tell me about the interior design company you started with Wolfgang Flür?

That was a brief cooperation, not a company.

Have you been working with Wolfgang recently?

We wrote some lyrics together about a year ago.

Thank you to Emil Schult for providing the opportunity for this interview and an insight into this mysterious person of Kraftwerk fame. □

Emil Schult, pictured at the soundcheck for Elektric Music's appearance at the Arvika Festival, Sweden, 1994



Biography - EMIL SCHULT

Born in 1946 in Dessau, Sachsen-Anhalt

Grew-up in the small town of Kevelaer with his 2 brothers and sisters. His father was a designer for industrial machines.

As Kevelaer is a place of pilgrimage, where devotional sculptures and pictures are made, he had the possibility of watching craftsmen at work.

- Attended Secondary School in Möchengladbach
- 1965, High School Diploma from Crystal Lake, Illinois
- 1966, Abitur at Fichte - Gymnasium in Krefeld
- 1966, entered the University of Münster and studied languages (Chinese), Philosophie and Art History
- 1968, because of the unstable political situation, he left Münster, and began the study of "Free Art" at the state Art Akademie in Düsseldorf

His teachers were : Diter Rot, Joseph Beuys, Gerhard Richter

- 1970, participated in the group exhibitions at Sum Galery in Reykjavik. Galerie Kümmel, Köln with Jan Voss, Robert Fillion and other Fluxus-artists
- Galery Rene Block, Berlin
- 1972 Published his first books partly funded by Fred Jahn (München) e.g. "Book of Man" parts 1-111 with drawings and Text.
"Dürers trip to the Moon" A comic Book with five artists from the Academy
- 8th Biennale Paris 1973
- Has also produced small film-clips around the class of Joseph Beuys, showing such artists as Immendorff, Stüttgen, Knoebel, Palermo, Kohlhöfer
- 1974 completed Art School as a Master Class student of Beuys and Richter
- Worked for 2 years as a High School Teacher
- Worked for 2 years as an Art Lecturer at the University of Münster
- Published books on the subject of art and art-didactics
- 1979, year in California with frequent visits to the Artificial Intelligence Centre at Stanford University
- Excursions to North, Central and South America
- travels to Brazil, Africa and the Carribean with comic artist Sergio Macedo
- 1972-1982, his artistic and poetic work centred around the German Electronic Music Group "Kraftwerk"

Co-Author of all major albums:

"Autobahn" (1974), "Radioactivity" (1975), "Trans-Europe-Express" (1977),
"Man - Machine" (1978), "Computerworld" (1981), "Electric Cafe" (1986)

- After the world tour in 1981, he retreated to the Bahamas where he lived with his wife Fredrica and two daughters until 1991

In the Bahamas he worked on wild-life documentations and with various artists around the Compass Point Music Studios.

An endangered world behind glass.

Improvised Video Work with Scott Fischer & Timothy Leary

- Since 1992 resident in Düsseldorf with main interests in Painting Film and Video.
- 1993 Videos "Crosstalk", "T.V." (For the group "Elektric Music")
- 1992-1994, various exhibitions as "Galerie Kontraste" Düsseldorf

Many fans who attended the Kraftwerk convention in Blackpool last year will remember the impressive performance given by Elektro Kinetik. They performed a set of Kraftwerk songs including 'Tour De France', 'Home Computer', 'Sex Object' and 'Europe Endless'. Having generated a lot of interest amongst the convention goers, Elektro Kinetik retreated to their self contained studio in their home in West Wales to perfect their sound. In doing this they have dropped the Elektro part of their name and are now simply called... KINETIK.

The synthetic duo consist of Colin Jordan and Shirleyann Davies. The music which they are now working on is completely original but retains obvious sounds and structures of their Kling Klang influences. Since the convention, Colin and Shirleyann have produced a demo CD and cassette with an accompanying folio of pictures and details of band history and musical techniques. The CD, which is a strictly limited gold pressing, has a cover designed and printed by Dave England, whom some of you may remember as the percussionist and videographer from the debut performance of Elektro Kinetik at the 1993 Kraftwerk Convention. Dave is planning an installation of his art work next year and music for this event is to be produced by Kinetik's Colin Jordan, under the directions of Dave. The natural and synthetic sounds will be conducive to the visuals of this forthcoming exhibition. Other future collaborations in the Kinetik pipeline appear to be some songs to be written and recorded with Simon Darvell, who provided additional keyboards, guitar and percussion at last years Convention performance.

The title of the recent Kinetik demo has been appropriately called 'Kinetik Energy'. This demo is a preview of material which will be appearing in a self-produced CD provisionally entitled 'Refined'. Kinetik plan to have the finished product ready for release by December 1995. The underlying theme of this project (influenced by local power stations and refineries) has been the generation and use of energy in the environment and communications. Using a combination of analogue and digital synthesizers, Kinetik are creating sounds, songs and textures to reflect this theme, aided by sampling technology and digital recording capabilities.

Colin and Shirleyann have been writing and recording with the help of their like-minded friend and musician Allen Hardy. Allen having been proficient in the use of MIDI sequencing found a whole new world of programming had opened up to him when introduced to the joys and headaches of using Colin's CV and gate controlled synthesizers. Allen's home studio consists of a home computer running dedicated music software, MIDI keyboards and guitar, which he uses for his more rock-orientated style and developing material for Kinetik and other local bands. Allen has also provided video footage for Kinetik towards their 'Refined' project. On writing and recording the 'Kinetik Energy' demo there has been much swapping of floppy disks and dubbing onto DAT's. The tracks appearing on the demo are as follows; 'KINETIK ENERGY', 'PIPELINE', 'NETWORKING', 'REFINED' and an instrumental remix of 'KINETIK ENERGY'.

Kinetik are hoping to play live this year and next. There is an invitation to play at an Arts Festival in West Wales and also some other low-key events. The band feel that these would be ideal opportunities to preview their new material, as they all enjoy performing and improvising in a live situation. With a view to live performances becoming more frequent, Colin Jordan has designed and built equipment to make their stage presence feasible, reducing the large volume of outboard equipment to reproduce their new studio sound.

Last year, Colin was invited to record music for an educational CD-ROM and was involved with production work, which he expects to continue with into next year. This will be after the completion of Kinetik's 'Refined'. Shirleyann, being classically trained, is also planning to re-interpret some more traditional pieces of music in an electronic format, using her woodwind playing talents on MIDI-acoustic wind-controlled instruments.

Aktivität asked Kinetik how they felt about emulating the style of Kraftwerk in their own music. Colin Jordan replies; "Since Kraftwerk do not appear to be making many records at the moment, we felt it would be nice to carry on some of their traditions and give people the sounds and style of music they would like to hear".

We look forward to hearing and seeing Kinetik soon and wish them success with their music.

For further details on Kinetik's activities, please contact; Kinetik,

For many years I have looked in wonder at the flashing LED ties that Kraftwerk wear during their concerts. Detailed below is how to make your own LED ties. They would be great for Kraftwerk discos & parties, Kraftwerk conventions and of course Kraftwerk concerts!

How to make your own Kraftwerk LED Tie

by Mark Monckton

The tie consists of 10 LEDs which flash in sequence from top to bottom. The circuit contains a variable preset resistor to allow different flash rates to be set. Power is provided by a single PP3 9V type battery.

If you have very little or no Electronics experience, you may want to try out some simpler circuits from the two books listed at the end.

To build yourself a tie you will need the following basic electronics equipment: *Soldering Iron, wire clippers, solder, Modelling knife, pliers, desolder sucker.*

MAKING THE MAIN PCB BOARD

First step is to make the main circuit board layout. Place the IC's in the position as shown the diagram. Either use Tracktronic copper tracks or wires to connect the circuit together.

The numbers next to the tracks from the IC's are the IC pin number. Connect each pin number as shown in the diagram.

Next, solder vero pins to the PCB to allow connection of wires to the LED tie section. Stagger the pins to allow extra room to solder the wires. To reduce the amount of wires used for 0v to complete the circuit, one wire can be used.

MAKING THE LED TIE PART

Cut out a piece of cardboard 20cm long by 3cm wide by 1mm thick. From 1cm down from the top the card, mark each LED 2cm apart.

Note: LEDs must be connected the correct way round. The longer lead is the 'anode' and MUST be connected to positive, the shorter lead is the 'cathode' and must be connected to the negative.

Make two holes for each LED into the card, and glue them in (all cathodes aligned to the right). Now connect all the Cathodes together as shown in the diagram and wire to the 0v line. The anode of each LED is wired to the corresponding pin of the IC.

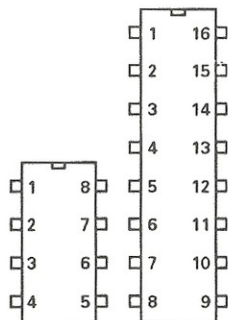
FINAL ASSEMBLY

Once you have completed both parts, connect the PP3 battery.

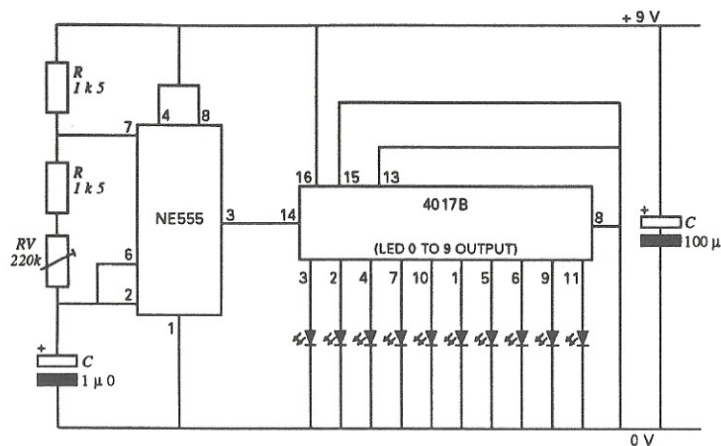
If you find that one or more LEDs do not work, check that the LED is wired the correct way round. Otherwise, check all connections between components. Most problems are caused by bad soldering or bad connections.

Once you are happy with your circuits, you can then put them into your tie. The battery can be hidden in the tie or in your pocket.

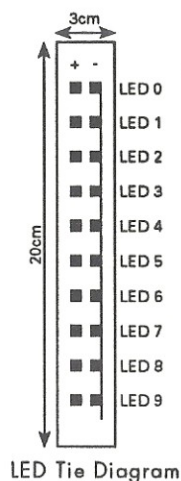
To change the rate of the LEDs, use a small screwdriver to adjust the Variable Preset resistor.



IC Pin Numbers



Circuit Diagram



PARTS LIST:

Description	Quantity	Code *	Price
Low Current LEDs 5mm....	10	UK48C	£0.28
PC elect 1uF 100V	1	FF01B	£0.10
mini elect 100uF 16V	1	RA55K	£0.14
Metal film resistor 1K5	2	M1K5	£0.04
Preset Vert 220K	1	UH20W	£0.19
NE555N	1	QH66W	£0.44
HCF4017B	1	QX09K	£0.95
DIL Socket 8 pin	1	BL17T	£0.05
DIL Socket 16 pin	1	BL19V	£0.10
PP3 Clip	1	HF28F	£0.14
PCB	1	Tandy	£2.00
Wire L/C Black	1	BL46A	£1.36
Card Board 1mm thick.....	1		

* Code from Maplin electronics catalogue

Other Optional Items:

9V PP3 battery, Tracktronic Copper track#, Insulation Tape (Black), Clear glue.

Further Reading:

50 Simple L.E.D. Circuits. by R.N. Soar. ISBN 0-85934-043-0

Optoelectronics Circuits Manual. by R.M.Marston. ISBN 0-7506-0157-4

Suppliers:

* Maplin Electronics, PO Box 2, Rayleigh, Essex. SS6 2BR. Tel: 01702 554161

Commotion, Unit 11, Tannery Road. Tonbridge, Kent. TN9 1RF. Tel: 01732 773399

Some Spanish releases are very appreciated among Kraftwerk collectors due to their different picture sleeves. In general, all the Spanish Kraftwerk releases are difficult to find, even in Spain. This is true even for the 'The Mix' LP. Of course, the most interesting ones are very difficult to find.

Collectors Corner - Spain

by José García Corral

This fact is due to the low sales of Kraftwerk records in Spain. The record market in Spain is far from being as important as it is in the UK, for instance. (The gold award for record sales is given to artists selling 50,000 copies. The total amount of LPs sold in Spain in 1986, including all kinds of music, was of nine million copies.) To this adds the fact that, for some records, the import copies from Germany, Holland or UK become widely available at shops well before the "Made in Spain" copies are pressed. In these cases, the number of copies pressed is very small, as they are unlikely to be sold once the public has already bought the import copies.

Spanish releases can be distinguished for the inclusion of text in Spanish at the bottom of the back cover on records sleeves. Some of them also feature the phrase *Made in Spain* on the back sleeve and on the record label. A sure way of distinguishing Spanish releases from other countries' is checking they have the abbreviation *S.G.A.E.* printed on the record label. It stands for *Sociedad General de Autores de España* (The Spanish association of music artists). All the original releases on the Capitol/EMI labels up to 1982 have the prefix 10C or 1J on their cat. no.'s. Most, if not all, Spanish records have labels with the original titles in English and their corresponding translations to Spanish.

Most of the 7" singles are available as standard and promo releases. Promo copies released before the 'Computer World' LP are just like the standard copies, record label and all, but with the addition of a sticker on the record label stating they are promos. From then on, promo copies have the text stating their status actually printed on the record label. Apart from 7" singles, I only know of promo copies of two LPs and one 12".

What follows is not an exhaustive list of all the Spanish releases. It concentrates on those that might appeal to collectors.

7" SINGLES

The rarest 7" released in Spain is *Autobahn/Morgenspaziergang* with a front sleeve similar to the German version of this single. The b-side is credited as '*Morgenspaziergang*' (Morning Walk), as it is in the equivalent single from USA, misprint and all. The graphics though are different, with the song titles printed in a different typestyle from the more commonly used German edition, and the colours of the 'autobahn' landscape are darker. The back sleeve is the same as the front. The included edit of the a-side is different to the US and German versions, being a straight 3'10 cut of the full version. The label is white with the swirl Vertigo logo and text in black.

Radioactividad/Antena, Los Maniqués, La Modelo, Calculadora de Bolsillo, Amor de Computadora, Las Modelos/Computer Love, are all 7" that boast on the front sleeve song titles in Spanish. Although the actual versions contained on the records are with the usual lyrics in English, they are nice sleeve variations.

Radioactividad/Antena has a similar sleeve to other releases, except for the song titles in Spanish (*normal versions of the tracks though - IAC*). The back sleeve shows a small reproduction of the LP and the various credits in black.

Trans-Europe Express is not much different from other countries' versions. The front sleeve has the usual futuristic train on a black background. The back sleeve shows again a small repro of the LP plus the various credits and logos in black.

Los Maniqués is the title printed in the front sleeve of *Showroom Dummies/The Hall of Mirrors*. A much nicer and colourful one than the two previous ones! It represents a painting with a frame in black and tones of blue and green inside which there is a reproduction of the b&w Seymour photo, as in the LP. Above this, the legend 'especial discjockey' is printed in white and yellow. Kraftwerk and '*Los Maniqués*' are printed in pink inside a white rectangle. Albeit a very elusive item, this is not a promo-only release. It was common for 7"s of that period released by the Spanish EMI-Odeon

record co. to feature the 'especial discjockey' tag. The back sleeve is plain white with the various credits, logos, etc. in black. The two edits featured are different from all other countries' releases. The labels for the above three records are the usual orange coloured ones with Capitol in golden letters and text in black.

The Robots/Spacelab has a full colour sleeve showing an enlarged part of the pic from the 'Man Machine' LP, with graphics in white. The rear has the same pic, with credits in white plus a list of the available LPs and cassettes.

La Modelo/Metropolis is another elusive item. This one uses the same pic as the previous release, but a larger portion and in smaller size. The colours are poorly reproduced. The graphics used are large, in white against black background. The back sleeve is white with titles, credits, etc. in black plus small reproductions of the three Capitol LP sleeves. Labels for the singles from 'The Man Machine' have the regular maroon with silver text Capitol design.

Calculadora de Bolsillo/Dentaku is the same as other countries' releases. The only difference is the addition of the title on the front cover in calculator style lettering. This is perhaps one of the easier Spanish 7" singles to come by. Not so for the promo version of the single! The record label is yellow with black letters.

Next is *Amor de Computadora/The Model*. A very nice sleeve variation it has too. The front sleeve features an enlarged portion of the computer screen with the computerised faces in yellow, as on the LP cover, with the Spanish title in computerised yellow letters. The back sleeve is plain white with... (guess it?) graphics, credits, etc in black. This 7" is another of the difficult ones to come by. It seems standard non-promo copies are scarcer.

When 'The Model' reached the No. 1 in the UK charts, a variation of this previous 7" was released, in the same way that the UK release was repromoted with the A and B sides flipped, again with the same cat. no. retained ; *Las Modelos/Computer Love* (it seems this time there were more than one model as opposed to the 1979 release in which there was only one!). Another nice sleeve variation, with the pic. of the dummies from the back sleeve of the 'Computer World' LP, in b&w, similar to the French equivalent. The graphics, though, are different. There is the Kraftwerk logo, a 'Número 1 en Inglaterra' logo and the Spanish title, all in blue. The back sleeve is... a plain black one with graphics and the rest in white. Promo copies appear to be more common, but are again difficult to find.

'Tour de France', 'Musique Non Stop' and 'The Telephone Call' are the remaining 7" releases from Spain, with no different sleeves to other countries. Standard non-promo copies of these three seem to be less common. The labels for all these records are the usual cream coloured EMI ones, with text in black. So for the promo copies except for 'Musique Non Stop' and 'The Telephone Call', of which promo copies have a white label with text in black.

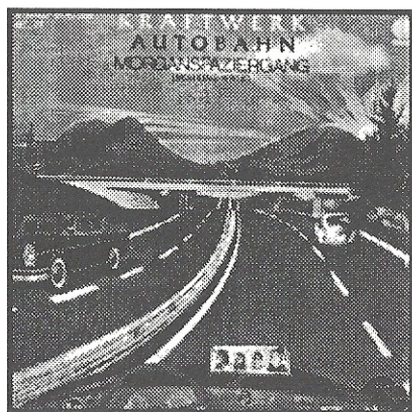
12" SINGLES

The 12" single was not a popular format in Spain until 1983 or so. There only exist four Kraftwerk singles released on this format in Spain. The first single to appear on 12" is 'Tour de France'. The song was featured on the TV reports of the *Vuelta Ciclista a España* in 1984 (I never missed them!). The versions featured on the single are the standard ones, not the remixed versions. The sleeve is the same as usual, with the addition of a round logo with the text "45 rpm Maxisingle". Promo copies exist too. The singles from the 'Electric Cafe' album were also released on 12". 'Musique Non Stop' and 'The Telephone Call' are, again, very similar to other countries' versions. They only have the added logo "Maxisingle 45 rpm" on the front cover. The last single released on 12" is 'The Robots' (1991). The sleeve is similar to the UK release version 2. As the copies that turn up on shops are usually the first version of the UK release, the Spanish ones are rather scarce. Labels for the 12"s: the standard cream EMI design.

LPs

The least known-of record released in Spain, and the most sought after by the ones who know about its existence, is, no doubt, the 'Electric Cafe Edición Española' LP. Still today it is a little known-of item, even among Spanish fans. It has been only recently that collectors have added this item to their 'wanted list' after reading the confusing and imprecise information about this LP contained in the 'Man, Machine and Music' book. The interest of this LP remains in the fact that it's the only release to feature a version of 'Sex Object' with complete lyric in Spanish (with bits in English and

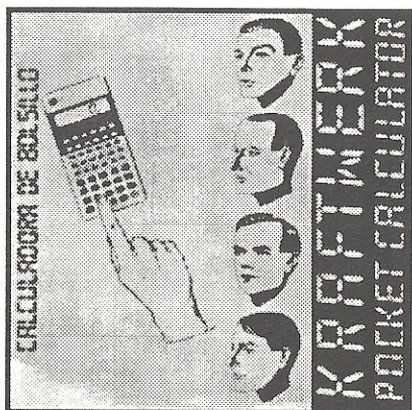
1.



2.



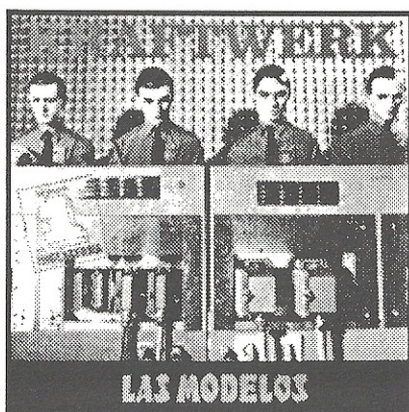
3.



4.



5.



1. AUTOBAHN 7"

2. THE ROBOTS 7"

3. CALCULADORA DE BOLSILLO 7"

4. AMOR COMPUTADORA 7"

5. LAS MODELOS 7" (1982)

German). Reading the book, people get the wrong impression that this was the only version released in Spain. This is not true. The standard version of *'Electric Cafe'* (EMI, 074 24 0644 1) was released in Spain in Nov. 1986, with versions in English of the songs (and all the various bits in different languages). Some weeks later, a few copies of *'Electric Cafe Edición Española'* (EMI, 074 24 0688 1) could be seen in some shops. The only difference in the packaging of this one is the addition of "*Edición Española*" beneath the box containing the title. The whole title doesn't give a clue of the LP containing lyrics in Spanish (instead, it gives the impression of "LP made in Spain"). This could be the reason for its very poor sales in Spain, especially after fans had bought the standard version already. A handful of copies were exported to shops in the UK and Germany at least. Promo copies of the standard *'Electric Cafe'* exist. This may also be true for the *'Edición Española'*, but this is unconfirmed.

Another interesting Spanish release is *'The Man Machine'* LP. This features the added title in Spanish "*El Hombre Maquina*" above the titles in French, English and Russian. This is the only Spanish LP to include the title in Spanish in its front cover. A white label test pressing of this LP exists. It has no picture sleeve.

'Autobahn' was the first Kraftwerk LP released in Spain, in 1975 (certainly after the success in the US). The front sleeve is the same as the German one, but in darker colours. The back sleeve is in plain white with credits in black letters. A second batch of sleeves was reprinted in 1977. Both issues are scarce, but the 1975 ones are more difficult to find. The re-release of *'Autobahn'* in 1985 was also issued in Spain but, as it was well after the import copies made it to the shops, this is a quite scarce item. The front cover is the same as other countries' re-release. The back cover is plain white again, with credits in black, in a different kind of lettering.

Other desirable releases among Spanish collectors are the LPs *'Kraftwerk'*, *'Kraftwerk 2'* and *'Ralf & Florian'*, which were not released in Spain until 1979 for the first two, and 1978 for the latest one. All have similar packaging to the original German versions. These are rather scarce but they are usually in nice shape.

The *Fame* series was called *'Fama'* in Spain. *'Radio-Activity'*, *'The Man Machine'* and *'Computer World'* were released on the *'Fama'* series. They all feature on the front sleeve a frame surrounding the cover picture, and the *'Fama'* logo on one of the upper corners. *'The Man Machine'* is the most different one from the standard release, as it has two frames, black and white, surrounding the front cover. It retains the title in Spanish as well.

To my knowledge, no Kraftwerk compilation LPs have ever been released in Spain.

CASSETTES

Cassette tapes are not usually of interest to collectors. However, it is worth mentioning that all the LPs (but *'Autobahn'*?) released in Spain have the equivalent release on tape. This is particularly true for *'Kraftwerk'*, *'2'*, *'Ralf & Florian'* and *'Electric Cafe Edición Española'*. Needless to say, these four are the most difficult Spanish Kraftwerk tapes to find.

CDs

Although there is a CD pressing plant in Spain, no Spanish Kraftwerk CDs have ever been pressed. All the CDs available in shops are imports, mainly from Europe.

That's about it. I hope this article is of some help to collectors. □

COMPLETE LIST OF RELEASES

7" SINGLES

Autobahn (Edit) (3.19) / Morgenspaziergang (4.00)	Vertigo ...	61 47 009	1975
Radioaktivität (Edit) (3.18) / Antena (Edit) (3.05)	Capitol ...	1J 006-82119	1976
Trans-Europe Express (Edit) (3.52) / Franz Schubert (Edit) (3.25)	Capitol ...	10C 006-85077	1977
Los Maniques (Edit) (4.33) / The Hall of Mirrors (Edit) (3.52)	Capitol ...	10C 006-085211	1977
The Robots (Edit) (3.43) / Spacelab (Edit) (3.30)	Capitol ...	10C 006-085496	1978

La Modelo (3.38) / Metropolis (Edit) (5.59)	Capitol	10C 006-085965	1979
Calculadora de Bolsillo (Edit)(4.36) / Dentaku (Edit)(4.33)	EMI	10C 006-064365	1981
Amor de Computadora (Edit)(3.45) / The Model (3.38)	EMI	10C 006-064509	1982
Las Modelos (3.38) / Computer Love (Edit) (3.45)	EMI	10C 006-064509	1982
Tour de France (3.05) / Tour de France (Instrumental)(2.39)	EMI	006 1651867	1983
Musique Non Stop (7" version)(4.08) / Musique Non Stop (Version)(3.19)	EMI	006 20 1508 7	1986
The Telephone Call (Remix)(Edit)(3.47) / Der Telefon Anruf (Remix)(Edit)(3.47)	EMI	006 20 1637 7	1987

12" SINGLES

Tour de France (Long version)(6.30) / Tour de France (3.05) / Tour de France (2e Étape)(2.40)	EMI	052 16 5250 6	1983
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Promo copies are also available.

Musique Non Stop (6.15) / Musique Non Stop (7" Version)(4.08)	EMI	052 20 1523 6	1986
The Telephone Call (Remix)(8.10) / Housephone (4.54) / Der Telefon Anruf (Remix)(Edit)(3.47)	EMI	052 20 1638 6	1987
Robotronik (4.51)/The Robots (Single Edit)(3.43)/The Robots (Album version)(8.56)	EMI	052 20 4358 6	1991

LPS

Kraftwerk	Philips	6305 058	1979
Kraftwerk 2	Philips	6305 117	1979
Ralf and Florian	Philips	6305 197	1978
Autobahn	Vertigo	63 60 620	1975

(with a second batch of copies w. sleeve dated 1977)

Autobahn, re-issue	EMI	066 240070 1	1985(?)
Radio-Activity	Capitol	1J 062-82087	1976
Radio-Activity, re-issue	Capitol	10C 062-82087	1978(?)
Radio-Activity 'Fama' re-issue	Capitol	056 18 2087 1	1986(?)
Trans-Europe Express	Capitol	10C 064-85110	1977
Trans-Europe Express, re-issue	Capitol	064-1851101	1986
The Man Machine	Capitol	10C 068-085444	1978

(w/ test pressing copies available)

The Man Machine 'Fama' re-issue	Capitol	056 185444 1	1986
Computer World	EMI	10C 068-064370	1981
Computer World, re-issue	EMI	068 164371	1987
Computer World 'Fama' re-issue	EMI	056 16 4370 1	1986(?)
Electric Cafe	EMI	074 24 0644 1	11/1986

(Promo copies available)

Electric Cafe Edición Española	EMI	074 24 0688 1	1987?
The Mix (2-LP set)	EMI	172 79 6671 1	1991

CASSETTES

Kraftwerk	Philips	71 05 248	1979
Kraftwerk 2	Philips	71 05 249	1979
Ralf and Florian	Philips	71 05 147	1978
Radio-activity	Capitol	10C 262-82087	1976
Radio-activity 'Fama' re-issue	Capitol	256 18 20874	1986(?)
Trans-Europe Express	Capitol	10C 264-85110	1977
Trans-Europe Express 'Fama' re-issue	Capitol	256 1851 104	1987
The Man Machine	Capitol	10C 268-085444	1978

The Man Machine 'Fama' re-issue	Capitol	256 1854 444	1978
Computer World	EMI	10C 268-064370	1981
Computer World 'Fama' re-issue	EMI	256 1643 704	1986(?)
Electric Cafe	EMI	274 2406444	11/1986
Electric Cafe Edición Española	EMI	274 2406884	1987?
The Mix	EMI	278 7 966 714	1991

8-TRACK CARTRIDGE

Trans-Europe Express	Capitol	10C 364-85110	1977
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Thanks to Vicente J García Álvarez and Andrés García Aparicio for additional info.

Forum

by B Cassidy

I hate Kraftwerk's music. O.K., how many of you obsessives out there are in rage at this comment. Come on, own up all you out there who would support what Kraftwerk stand for wind, rain or shine? Of course, I don't actually dislike Kraftwerk's music, to be truthful I would confess to being literally addicted to it. Yes, Kraftwerk's music is addictive. At first you like it, you find it interesting, it's different, bizarre even! Then it's stylish, it becomes fashionable to you, despite what others say, you find yourself being continuously drawn towards it.

What is it about this music that we like so much? Most of it's catchy, that's for sure. Before too long you find yourself humming and whistling 'Pocket Calculator', 'The Model', 'The Telephone Call' and 'Computer Love' but to name a few. Before long your starting to hear the subtleties and appreciate the hidden depth embodied in each track. From now on your hooked! Ralf Hütter once said in an interview that all people like order and repetition. He probably wasn't far wrong. In order, in predictability, we find comfort. We can foresee what is going to happen next, so our brains don't have to work so hard in trying to predict what might happen.

The music of Kraftwerk is most definitely repetitive, so there is one pointer to the appeal. Some tracks take the repetitive aspect to extremes, not least on the Computer World album. 'Numbers' is a track stripped so barely that the only thing that could undermine its minimalism is silence! However, this minimalism isn't quite as regimented as first appears. The mass of subtlety is another appeal of Kraftwerk's musical efforts. It's not just in the blatant electronic sounds that each track brings, it's in the percussion, the bass and the melody. Percussion changes frequently, if not in beats per second/bar then in pitch or duration, the same also being true of bass and melody. Melody in particular has a tendency to develop slightly as a track progresses, a sort of build-up or conclusion to indicate the nearing of the end of the track.

Kraftwerk's music therefore appears at first to be simple, much more so than most other musicians works. With continued listening however it is evident that less has turned out to be more. The next matter in hand is the business of lyrics in Kraftwerk's music. There is no doubting that they accompany the music perfectly, and I don't just say that because they are often synthesized. Even when Ralf, and sometimes other Kraftwerk members, treats us to their monotonous dronings the marriage between verse and music is, well, interesting to say the least. Sometimes a story is told, as in 'Showroom Dummies', but more often than not it is partial abstraction, even fantasy. Is, perhaps, the reason for the inclusion of lyrics anything to do with the fact that music with words is more popular? Is it to add variety to the music? Maybe the lyrics are present to underline the understatement of the music? Think about it yourself - would Kraftwerk's music stand up as well without the inclusion of lyrics? Are Kraftwerk being commercial? As one last thought for the moment, don't all you fans who are eager to see box sets and such like think that the digital remastering treatment of Kraftwerk's back catalogue would be a mistake? I for one think that such tampering would have an enormous effect on the subtle qualities of each album. This is especially true of the fact that most Kraftwerk albums implement heavy use of analogue technology, which has an inverse effect when 'digitalised'. Then again, perhaps I'm being picky and that in fact most of you who like Kraftwerk's music don't notice so much all the various subtleties? □

Music is only part of the message of Kraftwerk. It is obvious that the band are as much concerned with the concept of 'ganzheit' (wholeness) or 'gesamtkunstwerk', so it is no surprise to learn that the bands choice of graphics also plays as important a role as the music and text.

The Artwerk of Kraftwerk

by Ian Calder

The most interesting period for Kraftwerk's cover art was in the 1970's, when the sleeve designs mixed images/concepts from various sources. Throughout the 80's and 90's, the bands record cover designs have become more simplistic and less influenced by non-Kraftwerk sources. The artwork for the *'Radioactivity'* album for instance contains a multitude of images; the use of an antiquated radio set, the 'Volksempfänger' radio set from 1930's Germany, the 'radio mast' painting, redolent of the famous 'RKO' film studios image, again from the 30's, visually depicting the invisible waves pulsing into the ether. Even the photo of Kraftwerk themselves, Ralf's choice of microphone again harks back to an earlier era. Such a microphone conjures up images of the golden age of radio, before television arrived, when it occupied prime position in the home-entertainment stakes. These images contain overtones of an earlier time and frame of mind, adding further layers of meaning that the music of *'Radioactivity'* itself can't add.

The stylish sleeve design for *'Trans-Europe Express'* continues with this idea of recreating an image of the past, an earlier, stylish and even romantic era of travel. The photo's of Kraftwerk used on the cover actually date from a couple of years before the LP's release, before *'Radioactivity'* even. These are photo's but with additional airbrush artwork, this treatment reminiscent of glamorous, film star portraits of an earlier age. The choice of typography used in the sleeve is again redolent of a 30's/40's era design, stylish sans serif type, identifiable with poster designs of such an era.

The inner sleeve image is again based on an earlier portrait of Kraftwerk, first published on the German 7" single cover for *'Radioaktivität'* in 1976. It incorporates elements of a painting by Maxfield Parrish. Parrish came to prominence primarily through his painting, *'Daybreak'*, a kitsch example of stylish art. (The sun-dappled leaves and mountainous background are the elements of this painting incorporated into the Kraftwerk picture.) The painting has itself featured on at least two other record sleeves; the most recent, back in 1984, was *'The Waking Hour'*, the first, and only, LP by *Dali's Car*, the band formed by Mick Karn (ex-Japan) and Peter Murphy (ex-Bauhaus). It has also been used, in a re-designed pastiche form, on a *Moody Blues* LP sleeve.

The most striking example of this synthesis of historically inspired images is the *'Man Machine'* album. Often misinterpreted as a fascist design, it mixes the ideas of the 'man-machine' concept that Kraftwerk had talked openly of for a number of years beforehand, with the post-revolution Russian art and its idea of a 'mass man', a cog in the machinery, and similar 'rabotnik' (worker) concept too.

The front cover of *'The Man Machine'* is very much a take on Russian poster art, used to communicate ideals via the strong, angular graphics and heroic poses of the workers portrayed, gazing aside into the distance. The angular graphics first came to light with the art movement of constructivism, a movement with influences from both cubism and futurism; all these movements have, to varying degrees, a common theme of the machine age running throughout. Hence the ambiguity with fascism; the futurist art movement employed similar stylistic means to communicate their vision of modernity. *New Order*, a band influenced by Kraftwerk amongst others, have in the past used almost direct copies of Italian futurist art manifesto covers on their record sleeves (*'Movement'*, *'Procession'*/*'Everything's Gone Green'*).

A leading figure in constructivism was an artist by the name of *El (Lazar) Lissitzky*. The design of the back cover of *'The Man Machine'* is a straight copy on one of El Lissitzky's works. The original appeared in a book, *'Of Two Squares'*, first conceived in 1920, published in both German and Dutch editions later. This little book was intended, as El Lissitzky explained, as a playbook for children which might also amuse grown-ups. The design of the book is, as was El Lissitzky's aim, made from simple, geometric shapes, minimalistic in style, free from the influences of the past to represent the present and future. The only colours employed being red, black and white, a dynamic arrangement of type to add to the effect. The

parallels with Kraftwerk's own musical patterns of the time are obvious; linear, minimalistic, and with an economy of effort.

A sequence of events, the story of two squares and their subsequent effects, the titles of the images convey the sequence of events: 'Here are the two squares' - 'They fly on to the Earth from far away and' - 'And see a black storm' - 'Crash - and everything flies apart' - 'And on the black was established Red Clearly' - 'This is the end - let's go on'. Similar in style to one of El Lissitzky's most recognised poster designs, *'Beat The Whites With The Red Wedge'*, the ideological overtones are at work in the subject. None more obvious than the work that is reproduced on the rear cover of *'The Man Machine'*; a detail from the image titled *'And on the black was established Red Clearly'*. The Communist overtones unavoidable.

'The Man Machine', for what little it employs in lyrics, has a lot of undercurrents running through its form. The first track, *'The Robots'* is a good example of how all the elements merge together; 'robot' is derived from the Russian word 'rabotnik', meaning worker. This could be linked into the idea of 'musikarbeiter' (musical workers) that Kraftwerk have, along with the 'man machine' idea, practised and discussed in interviews for decades now. The title of the album, in English, is accurate but also applicable and conjured more from Die Mensch Maschine is the idea of 'the human machine' as well perhaps.

Kraftwerk's artwork throughout the 80's and 90's has become less obvious in its outside influences, more generated from within. The *'Computer World'*, *'Electric Cafe'* and *'The Mix'* are all pretty much cast from the same die; the graphics have been reduced to computerised type, either dot-matrix style, LED style or OCR (optical character recognition) type, the images of the band themselves always synthetic; either computer-generated representations or plastic mannequins. The choice of computer used on the front of *'Computer World'* is perhaps the only linkage with the past, it being a rather bulky and outdated model, even in 1981.

The exception to this rule is with the *'Tour De France'* single, something of an oddity; it is based on the design used for a stamp from Czechoslovakia, again hailing from the 1930's.

As much a part of everything discussed here is Kraftwerk's use of visuals for their promo videos and those projected onto the screens when the band perform live. But that's another story... □

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bits



Ever wondered what *'Kohoutek'* was, as in the bands first single *'Kohoutek-Kometenmelodie'*? Kohoutek was in fact the name given to a much-hyped comet that passed by the earth in 1973/74, named after its discoverer, Dr Lobus Kohoutek, a Czechoslovakian astronomer working from Hamburg Observatory, who discovered two such comets within a space of ten days in the first half of 1973. Before the comet's appearance it had been widely predicted that it would be the 'comet of the century' and put on a more dazzling nightly display than that provided by Halley's comet in 1910, perhaps even greater than the most spectacular example, from a century earlier, the great comet of 1811.

Presumably, Kraftwerk must have felt that a song to mark this event was in order, hence the single. On this single, the versions are the reverse of what we are more accustomed to on the *'Autobahn'* LP; that is to say the 'fast' version is part one, the slower version part two. It works better on the *'Autobahn'* LP, where we can easily imagine that part one's slow, minimal style reflects the comets long period away from the solar system, a dim ball of rock and ice, drifting through the dark, cold depths of space. Part two sees it radiate into life, as it enters the solar system and is heated by the sun's rays, producing the coma, its brilliant tail that makes the comet visible from earth.

So why is there no reference to 'Kohoutek' on the versions from the *'Autobahn'* LP you may ask? Well, going back a bit, I mentioned that there was anticipation that the comet would be a spectacular one. In actual fact, the comet was a celebrated flop; it did not ignite into life anywhere near what was predicted, no doubt why it has passed into the depths of history as well as back into the depths of space. But the comet is due to reappear - in 10 million years or so! You may well ask what will appear first - the comet or the new Kraftwerk LP?! A newly discovered comet, Hale-Bopp, is setting records even now, it being the most distant comet ever found by amateurs, and by the time it appears nearer to the sun in 1997, may even better 1811's great comet. If no new LP, maybe a single then?!! IAC

There seems to be a certain amount of confusion surrounding a 12" E.P. which was released in the U.K. called *'All In A Days Work'*. To put the record straight I can offer the following hard facts; firstly, the public release title of it is *'All In A Days Work'* and was released only on 12" vinyl in 1991. It is an E.P. of tracks by various artists dedicated / influenced by Kraftwerk. It was released on the D.E.F. label in the U.K. (code: EE91) and contains five tracks which are: *Side A: 1. Autobahn by Pro-Gress, 2. S.O.S. by Eskimos & Egypt, Side B: 1. Neon-Eon by Gobo-Lo, 2. TimeCode by Time-Code, 3. Back To Future by Westbam*. The only Kraftwerk remix is the first track on side A which isn't too bad, all the other tracks simply contain Kraftwerk sounds / samples. It does not come in a picture sleeve as such but is housed in a green record company card cover with the company's logo on it.

There is also a white label promo copy titled *'The Werks'* (code: DEF 91) but contains exactly the same tracks as the public release. I only have the U.K. issues but it may have been released in other areas too, most probably Europe. B. CASSIDY

There has been a steady stream of letters over the years that the fanzine has been going raising the issue of how expensive and difficult it can be to collect Kraftwerk's releases. The following articles don't solve anything but you may well find your own thoughts reflected in them or maybe even disagree. Read on...

Collecting Kraftwerk - The Price of a Passion

So, you have saved up all your spare cash, you can feel it burning away in your pocket just itching to be spent and you have been searching through all the adverts in *Record Collector* trying to decide which item you are going to add to your collection, but is it worth the price?

Collecting and selling records has for some time been big business and large amounts of money exchange hands very quickly for what basically is just a flattened lump of plastic in a paper bag or plastic box.

Over the years, Kraftwerk have released a fair amount of records in many different countries with different picture sleeves, edits, coloured vinyls and of course language variations. So it is not surprising that there is a large market out there for the collector, if he is willing to pay the price asked.

When *'Record Collector'* magazine finally got around to doing their article on Kraftwerk (back in January 1991), it was at a period just as Kraftwerk were emerging back into the public gaze, which also prompted a dramatic increase in the prices asked for Kraftwerk items, an increase that has been steadily rising ever since, to the extent that many items are now well beyond the budget of most collectors (from the UK point of view at least). Take for example the red vinyl *'Die Mensch Maschine'* LP, which you would be extremely lucky to see for anything less than a price of £200 and what do you get for it in the end? The sleeve and music are just the same as the ordinary German issue and you're not actually going to play the record and thus deteriorate the quality are you?! Let alone re-sell it!

So what do you want to buy? Coloured vinyl? Releases from a particular country? Or anything in general? No matter what it is, the prices asked are getting beyond a joke. It often seems that, regardless of true rarity value, the fact that the record sleeve has 'Kraftwerk' on it entitles the seller to ask something just a bit more than normal for it.

Let us take, for example, the French 1976 issue of the *'Radioactivity' 7"*, which the record company, in their infinite wisdom, decided to issue with three variations in the sleeve design. The variations are relatively minor and all three have the same versions of the music on them. At anywhere between £10-£15 a copy, is it worth paying £45 to obtain three almost identical records in pursuit of a complete collection? Of course, they would be nice to own, but at a slightly cheaper price, thank you! Any such record by a different act may well be cheaper. A French import of *'Sound And Vision'* by *David Bowie*, released about the same time and only in one sleeve would cost about £10 maximum. So, is it that dealers are inclined to put an extra fiver on top just because of the Kraftwerk title on the sleeve?

Import records seem to have a price range all to themselves. You can pay £40 for a Hungarian 7" of *'Pocket Calculator'*, or be completely and utterly ripped-off by paying £25 to HMV for a German import CD. At this kind of price, would it not be cheaper to go to Germany, buy the CD's you want at the European price of £8's each AND have a holiday at the same time?! Sounds more like fun to me.

So, you have to be careful in what you are going to spend your money on if you want something completely unique to add to your collection. Past issues of *AKTIVITÄT* have included some rather good *'Collectors Corner'* articles giving detailed accounts of various rare records and what differentiates them from the more normal releases. This is a good guide to prevent you wasting that second mortgage on something almost identical to a release that you picked up for 2 quid.

In contrast to all this, the German 12" picture disc of *Elektric Music's 'TV'* has actually dropped in price, from a ludicrous £25 to a slightly more affordable £13. For something that has not been on the market all that long, certainly in comparison with most Kraftwerk rarities, this is still very high and what you may well ask yourself will be asked for it in the future?

Kraftwerk are currently rated 118th in the *Record Collector's* annual poll, under this month's current favourites of Oasis,

Blur, even Kylie Minogue of all people. Is it because the price of these artists records are a lot less than Kraftwerk that make them more collectable or is it just a reflection on the record buying public that makes Agnetha Faltskog a much more credible artist than Kraftwerk?! Surely, the price asked for Kraftwerk rarities must deter potential collectors? Ridiculously high prices are often asked for relatively commonplace rarities? Prices of £25+ for Kraftwerk 7" singles are relatively common; other artists may only have a small handful of genuinely rare releases that command such a price. Just look at the prices asked in *Record Collector* over the next few months for the UK luminous vinyl 12" of 'Neon Lights' to see how much the price spread varies, for what is by no means a mega-rarity.

Prices for Kraftwerk records are high and it seems there is no sign of this changing just yet, but do they have to be quite so high?
by STEWART ORD

Yes, indeed, collecting Kraftwerk isn't cheap. But that's neither the fault of the dealers nor us, the collectors. It is just the market - and, as buying and selling regulates the prices, they are high for Kraftwerk items, mainly those of the lower and medium price ranges.

Why? Kraftwerk didn't sell an awful lot of records during their career and they have never had as large a following as some contemporary artists of the eighties and nineties (like, for example, Depeche Mode, The Pet Shop Boys or even Madonna). This is reflected in the amount of records on the market, as can be easily seen - a regular Kraftwerk 7" (like a German 'Tour De France' remix 7", for example) may be just as rare as a (deliberately) limited edition Depeche Mode 12" or a Madonna shaped picture-disc. But in Kraftwerk's case, there are obviously lots of collectors trying to get what records are available, thus creating a sellers market.

Another point is the price range to be found on Kraftwerk pressings. As the market is small, the number of sales is small and the prices are not firmly established. So, dealers set a mark, which may be too high - but they may find a collector actually willing to pay that price and buy it anyway. So, a single £40 sale of a Hungarian 'Pocket Calculator' 7" single does not reflect the real value of this item.

Genuinely rare items are a different matter and these are actually quite cheap. A French red vinyl 'Man Machine' is very rare, but it won't cost more than £100 maximum - just look for the offers for those coloured vinyl Queen records in the wanted section in *Record Collector* and you'll see just how expensive a record can get! Or in the case of ABBA, look for some German-language Agnetha 7" singles and you won't think that £25 for 'Mini Calculateur' is so high at all.

There's only one solution for the collector; if it's too expensive, don't buy it. You'll find it again and most probably cheaper, given time. Or save money until some really rare item crosses your way. Think of it this way; you can still buy the very rarest of Kraftwerk items for less than £300... that won't buy you much in Beatles terms! by GUNTHER POECKER

Two sides of the story, at the end of the day you still have to fork out the cash for the records you want. What else is there to look out for then? One sentiment that is evident from the general AKTIVITÄT mail is that fans may well be willing to pay over the odds for Kraftwerk rarities but they don't necessarily want to be ripped off into the bargain. High prices can only be justified for genuinely rare and/or good condition copies. When you've paid good money for a record only to find it scratched, damaged or otherwise imperfect it's no joke. Human nature dictates that record sellers are going to try and make as much money as possible from their wares. So you have to be careful - make sure that what you are buying is in the condition it is described in - if it isn't, then ask for a refund or some form of discount. Most dealers with any kind of reputation will be happier to deal with a customer who has a genuine complaint and come to some kind of reasonable solution than lose a potential regular customer who may then criticise the shop/dealer involved to other people. Inevitably, you may find on some occasions you'll get no joy from this approach, but if you don't ask, you don't get. If you're unhappy with what you have received try this approach - it's better than just accepting what you have and remaining unhappy with it. But it is definitely a problem when you get Kraftwerk rarities for sale in a poor condition but the price has made no concession for this.

The other big question is are the records worth it? Not an easy one really. I aver on the side of the argument that the record is worth as much as you are willing to pay. As Gunther's article mentioned, there is no real guide to prices for Kraftwerk wares that more established collectors markets for the likes of The Beatles, Madonna, Queen etc benefit from. (I'm sure however that even there there is still much leeway and similar issues to deal with.) However, no one really wants to pay £100 for a record that they can't even give away 10 years from now. So, will Kraftwerk records retain their value in the way that 60's records from The Rolling Stones, The Beatles etc. do? Who can say for sure? Nobody I guess.

Looking at it objectively, I tend to feel that 10, 20 years on from now Kraftwerk records will indeed still be changing hands for cash. And here's why; so much of Kraftwerk's releases exist in small numbers - they've only rarely crossed into multiple-unit-shifting territory ('Autobahn', 'The Model'), so the majority of their records exist in genuinely small quantities. Even if there were to be a CD format re-issue programme that catered for more than the standard albums currently available, you would have to ask how faithfully would the re-issues be done - since the music is just one part of the appeal - would they retain particular edits/mixes, packaging, label design, sound quality even? Would compilations such as 'Exceller 8', 'Elektro Kinetik' be faithfully reproduced? Very unlikely - the band don't even seem keen on having their first three albums available in any form, never mind lovingly reproduced down to the last detail!

Secondly, Kraftwerk have been around long enough to establish that they are no mere fashion of the month; people are always going to appreciate Kraftwerk's music, thus we can but presume that there will remain a demand for their recorded output. However, don't blow that second mortgage buying up rarities as some form of investment, after all the only certain thing in life is death and taxes!

by IAN CALDER

THE EMI RE-ISSUES

by Stewart Ord

Compact Discs are a record companies goldmine, giving them an ideal excuse to re-issue all their back catalogue at every possible opportunity so that collectors can update their ageing vinyl collection in a digitally remastered form. Most record companies throw in a little temptation to the prospective buyer, to help loosen the purse strings, in the form of bonus tracks, extra photos or perhaps some kind of article/commentary about the artist or the particular release. So, you can imagine the excitement that was going around when EMI announced that they were re-issuing their Kraftwerk back-catalogue. The chance of extra tracks, some added photos, picture-disc CD, something, anything would be nice.

What a disappointment.

The chance was there for EMI to make a nice job of their entire Kraftwerk repertoire, do a large promotional campaign and bring Kraftwerk back into the public's eye. They had already achieved such a success when they re-issued David Bowie's old stock, complete with bonus tracks and extra photos/artwork. Instead, EMI chose to do a straight re-issue of the original compact discs; no bonus tracks, no nice booklet filled with additional pictures/relevant artwork, nothing, not even a picture on the discs themselves.

The days of an LP-length compact disc have disappeared over the last few years, so now an album of material is expected to be a lot longer than the 35 minute excursion that is 'Computer World'. Record companies flesh out their re-issues with bonus tracks; B sides, remixes, alternative or live cuts etc., giving the customer a little bit more for their money. While Kraftwerk don't have a vast selection of B sides and such like to choose from, would we not have been grateful to have some of the different versions of 'Pocket Calculator' for instance?; The French and Japanese versions both remain unavailable on CD. Similarly, there is the 1982 remix of 'Numbers' or the German 12" of 'Computer Welt' that could have been added. The artwork is also a bit basic, additional reproductions of singles sleeves, publicity photos, even the computer faces printed on the CD would have made it seem worth buying. With the average CD single lasting for between 20-30 mins, at the average price of £3.99, 'Computer World' seems rather expensive at £14.99, with no extras.

If other artists releases on EMI are to act as an example (Queen are a fine one) then this may well be merely the first such re-issue series. In another five years time, when we have bought the current run of discs on offer, will they run yet another re-issue programme but with extra bonuses this time round so that we are once again tempted to go out and buy the releases again in order to obtain the little extras. I for one feel cheated at what EMI are offering at the moment. □

FROM THE ROBOTS TO A HUMAN

AN INTERVIEW WITH
WOLFGANG FLÜR
BY THE PROF



The following interview took place after meetings in Düsseldorf in April 1995. In this interview, Wolfgang discusses the many different areas of his past and his new projects, including Yamo.

The Prof: Tell me a little of your background. How did you start in music?
Wolfgang Flür: My start in music was very similar to most of the other members. We all started by building our own bands. I built my first band, *The Beathovens*. We played all the English and German music in the local area of Düsseldorf. We were successful. After the Beathovens there were the *Anyway*, the *Fruit* and the *Black*. This last group we started to make our own first songs. Our group was hired by the avant-garde band *Kraftwerk* in 1971. It was a great experience. I followed Michael later to Kraftwerk, who were just recording.

You originally trained in furniture design but you became a musician. How did that happen?
Yes, that was the thing I always wanted to do! The studies of my parents, who were never glad about my wishes of becoming a musician, it was also very helpful for my life to design furniture.

How and when did you join your former colleagues, Kraftwerk?
In 1972 I was sitting at the drawing desk in the architects studio for warehouses when I got a call from Ralf Hütter: 'Could we have a session in our studio?' I was so astonished that I agreed of course.

How long have you known Emil Schult?
The same time as Kraftwerk. They were together. They all lived for a long time in a big flat very close to the lovely river Rhine. It was a very romantic time and the most important in my life.

Have you and Emil written any songs together?
Yes, of course. But not in Kraftwerk times. In the last years of my life, I asked Emil to help me with my lyrics for my new band Yamo, but I learn very fast. We worked together on 'My Love', 'Telephone Bill', 'From The Ocean', 'Planet In Fever' and 'The

Have you also worked with Emil on other projects - such as Yamo?
Yes, I liked to work with him on some art-objects, such as chairs, tables and others. We also built the very first electronic drum machine with his ideas.

When and why did you leave Kraftwerk?
1986/87. I left this band because I had the feeling to do something new. It was a very hard break for me, with lots of depressions for a long time. This became one of my new titles on my new band Yamo: 'I had to be changed'.

Did you have any input on 'The Mix' album before you left?

Do you still relate to the work you achieved with your former band?
Not so much in the last time. I do work very intensively on my new band Yamo. My memories about the time with the boys. The title of the new album is 'The Mix'. (It is a special German meaning...)

What is your reaction or thoughts to the styles of music that have emerged since Kraftwerk? Some areas derived from what you in your work in Kraftwerk?
This is surely a question of the generations. Our music with more from the romantic melodies with its own special synth

How did you get started in music?

Other artists. In my schooldays I liked hit-parade songs of the week. Specialists in covering The Beatles. The band *Spirits of Sound*. With a guitar player was *Michael Rother*. It was the end of my school band. Ending 'Autobahn'.

Were you a drummer?

Of the interior design was an idea of being a musician. But in other times

What was your work?

So, learning to make ground plans. I would meet you for a talk about music and proud of that important call

Were the band. We lived together in the old part of Düsseldorf. I guess.

Yes, when I made my own project, songs. I was not that trained in 'Inner Voice', 'Little Child', 'The Signals Of Love'.

Was design or artwork?

Chair-frames and special painting. I was in the band in 1973. Emil helped me

Nothing else after all these years. Following, but I knew "something" in my own project.

Left? - no!

Other colleagues?

My new songs. But I started to write a book will be 'Under one pillow

What now surrounds us and was in Kraftwerk helped to create?

Kraftwerk developed more and more sound in the first years, to the

rhythmic and robotic sounds from the late 80's. the 'techno' or 'tekkno' sound was created and a lot of bands did their own. The beat went faster and faster but the contents of the music became smaller and smaller. Today it's mostly the beat, that the young people meet.

Did you enjoy playing live and touring over the years in the various bands which you have kept the rhythm going?

Yes, I loved it very much. I'm a kind of vagabond and my home is the world. I could live everywhere, where there is a beautiful and healthy nature.

How do you feel about fans and a fanzine such as Aktivität?

It's OK with the fans, if they accept that I'm a normal, private person like everyone else. So I need also my private space. I don't want to be an idol to someone. Everyone should be his own fan. But this is a question of upbringing and education. If someone feels strong by himself, he can admire the work of another person without making him to his idol...

Do you get recognised in your hometown or on travels?

Yes, sometimes. But in general the profession of pop-musician in Germany is not worth so much as in your country. England has a very different pop culture. They love their musicians. In Germany, we are artists like painters or writers or actors. this profession is not that respectable as others. I had to learn this lesson in my own family.

You and Karl Bartos left to form your own project as Elektrik Music. This is now not the case, as he is successfully involved with other artists and projects. Do you still intend to work with him one day?

Who knows the future? I was never really involved in Karl's band, but we are in contact. Sometimes we meet each other and discuss our music.

Have you any intentions to collaborate or produce other groups and artists?

No, I'm not sure if I am able to do so. No, I don't want to do that.

What are your plans now and can you tell us about Yamo?

I built the group before two years ago, to make a song for the victims of the war in Bosnia, especially the children that have lost their parents and were wounded in the battles. I wanted to do something instead of only watching TV and getting information. I could not stand all those awful pictures every day.

I created the song 'Little Child' with co-lyricist Emil and the singer

On leaving Kraftwerk;

It was a very hard break for me,

with lots of depressions

following, but I knew

"something had to be changed"

Nina Moers. But I couldn't release it as a benefit single. There was not enough interest by the media or record companies.

In fact, that was the reason to go back to music again. Now I'm going to re-record that track and sing the song by myself. My album, which I call 'Blue Stories', is nearly 50% recorded and I hope to find the right company now in these days. My concept is not creating 'a new sound' but to bring my stories with different kinds of music that fit to the contents.

My partners in this work are Bodo Staiger (formerly with Rheingold) and Andy Thoma (from 'Mouse on Mars' project). I also met a young female singer at the 'kiosk'; Jedra Dayl. She has a lovely voice and is such a charming person that I am pleased for her to work with us. And? ... She agreed! I'm proud to present her in my project.

I hear the debut when it is released will be called 'Signals'. Can you tell us a little more about this and what we might expect from you?

Yes, you are right, I wanted to call my debut 'Signals', because one of my favourite songs is 'Signals of Love'. It's a sign to all the humans in the world. The music speaks by itself. But now I call the album 'Blue Stories'. It will be like a short-story book with different themes, from headlines of the newspapers, from my dreams and stories of my private life. They're all very different, like life is in general. They have to do with our responsibility for nature, the humans, the children. But they also have to do with observations of our teachers, our parents and the colours that surround us, with joy of life, love and fun and dancing...

Did you enjoy your meetings with people like LFO and Andy McCluskey from OMD?

Oh, yes, very much. I especially loved the meeting with Andy in my flat in Düsseldorf. We had such a nice evening in that summer, with some bottles of Italian white wine and a big bowl of the Wolfgang Flür special vegetarian salad. We were joking and talking the whole night then. Andy promised me to become the "Julio Iglesias de electronique" (harr-harr)!

Is there a particular artist you would like to work with one day?

Yes, I have already reached that point. I'm working with Andy Thoma, Bodo Staiger and Jedra Dayl on my music, with Emil Schult, Theo Queket and Lisa Hillebrand on my lyrics.

Is there any influence or music you like to listen to?

Oh, yes, of course I do have a lot of musical influences, since I can think and since I make music. I listen to every style of music that is developed in a good taste. Since the last three years, I do not listen so much to other music and I'm taking my 'silence days', I want to keep my ears free for my own melodies, if you know what I mean!



Onstage, 1981

1987, 'Telephone Call' video



Did you ever enjoy cycling or other sporting activities?

I knew that you would ask me that particular question! When I was with my former friends and we did the video for 'Tour De France' you see me cycling with 'the gang' in a reassuring speed. The reason is that I don't like speed of any kind. I hate to rush, to hurry, to fly... (oh, that could be another new title; 'Don't Rush and Hurry'). I'm really afraid of all of that. I don't know the reason, but slowness gives me more time to notice and enjoy my surroundings.

Another reason why I'm not in the usual sports is that I'm not interested in winning against someone else. It has always to do with a sort of competition. I don't need that. But I do go for long walks to the nice nature in this lovely area around my town. Sometimes I'm out for the whole day and sometimes I even go out at night. Not to the disco I mean. Not anymore. I have my best ideas by walking and mostly I go with my friends.

What plans so you have now?

Oh, what a question... Of course, I hope now to find the right company for my music and then I'd like to do some more albums with my friends. I will do one benefit song on every album in the future to support a home for children that were rescued from the horrible war in the former-Yugoslavia by brave people that are friends of mine.

Tell us a little about the sort of equipment you are now using to create your own songs, as your former band have always been associated with music technology to create their unique music tones.

I'm not so much into creating 'my own sound', whatever it could be. I'm more into making my melodies and my stories. I work very normal, as a lot of other artists. At first, I write my story and make the rhymes. During writing, I mostly get the melody by reading the sentences. I do only little arrangements afterwards with the usual Cubase program on my Macintosh computer. At first I set the drums and the beat. This is important for the singing, then I create the parts. I mean, the part of the song; the verse, the chorus or a bridge-part or other specialities. Mostly, I only know the melody line before. Everything else happens by doing and working. Then I make a copy of my program on floppy disk and go to the studio of Andy or Bodo and we start recording the instruments, drums and vocals and whatever is necessary for the song.

I wish to thank Wolfgang for this interesting interview and I hope it has given our readers an insight into this formerly secretive member of Kraftwerk. 

SMALL ADS

Please enclose a SAE/IRC when answering to adverts

WANTED: 1 copy of Kraftwerk 'Computer Tour' CD and 1 copy of 'Traffic Jam On Autobahn' double CD. Please write to: Basile Tonino,

FOR SALE; spare copy of Balanescu Quartet 'Possessed' CD (with string-arrangement covers of Kraftwerk tracks). Unplayed. £10 (including P&P) or £12 (incl P&P) for overseas. Write to; Tim Weldon,

FOR SALE; spare copy of 'Computer Tour' live CD (featuring great version of 'Metropolis') Please contact; Paul Corner,

My name is Alex Miller, I live in Moscow, Russia and would like to make new contacts in Europe. If interested then please write to; Alex Miller,

In the following article, I will be describing various radio appearances that Kraftwerk have appeared on over the years, chiefly interviews. There have been countless broadcasts from all over the world and some are inevitably more interesting than others, so I felt it would be best to quote the most interesting portions made, usually, by Ralf and describe the interview to you. If anybody has any more interviews/radio broadcasts from this particular period and would like Aktivität to review it then please get in touch, at the usual address.

Radio Interviews - Part One (1975-1981)

by Paul Wilkinson

1978

1978 - WKSU Kent, Ohio, USA, interview

This interview is one of the best to obtain as Ralf gives a very good account of Kraftwerk and what Kraftwerk is all about. He also doesn't avoid the questions that are put to him by the DJ, Jeff Wooton.

The interview was conducted with Ralf on the telephone from Düsseldorf, June 19th 1978. The programme is entitled *'The Industrial Wasteland'*. After a brief and slightly incorrect background, Ralf begins talking about German electronic groups and the German music scene. Ralf throughout this interview comes up with some memorable quotes such as *"we are scientists working in an acoustic laboratory"*. When asked why Kraftwerk were moving into their equipment and why it was becoming all electronic, Ralf gave a very interesting answer; *"Back in the early 70's, when we were using amplified drums, we always found that our drummers, they were hitting very hard during a concert, starting to sweat and their fingers were getting blisters and even spilling some blood. So we got very much upset about this situation, because myself and Florian were always playing the synthesizers and then we invented, with some engineers who work with us, some electronic drum kits, which we also have patented and now, for five, six years the drummers which play with Kraftwerk they don't sweat no more, they are on the same electronic level ... we have industrialised percussion because today's society is very percussive, with all the machines repetitive rhythms and we thought to include it in our music."*

When Ralf was asked about playing live and touring in 1978, he gave a very interesting and surprising answer; *"...we are working back here in Düsseldorf on our studio ... and it's very possible that we do another European tour in late summer or autumn and at that time we are hoping that we can come over back to the United States and play more concerts there ... since 1975 ... we have I think made some very important developments for us, where we have created some new kind of performance style, where in the past new ballet companies in Germany, they have been doing something with our music and this inspired us not to just stand or move your body to existing music, but we have now composed some kind of electronic body music."*

"We have invented some influence where you can stimulate electronic sounds with the movements of your body. By moving up your arms and legs and your whole body, we stimulate some electronic sounds and when we will do some performance we have some special kind of electronic ballet which we do ourselves, where create music through dancing."

"We have been doing something with lightbeams, it operates with lightbeams ... we used this for the first time when we made our European concert tour three years ago, but it was only the first model we designed, so now we have something more developed and we will be doing this in our concerts. And we can also play because we are using some of our music, we have invented some automatic music machines and they can play the organised part of the music so we don't have to concentrate on hitting the same note in every town we play, like most of the groups when they play they have to concentrate if they get the songs right etc. We have machines that can do that type of work, and we can fully concentrate on spontaneous things and we do a lot of improvising like when we play..."

With a little more discussion, this hour long broadcast is very interesting, with a selection of Kraftwerk music too makes it very enjoyable. Near to the end of the programme, Ralf comes up with a very interesting definition of Kling Klang;

"...we call our studio also some kind of 'electronic garden', where we have some kind of biological, bio-feedback with the machines and through the time they have been growing and getting more and more complex..."

USA 1978 interview

With 'The Man Machine' playing in the background, this short interview (I am not sure where it originally comes from) Ralf discusses developing within the field of technology and how they and you have to look forward to the future. One interesting quote from Ralf is (whether you actually believe it or not) *"We're not like a pop group but feel like scientists or doctors who work in a laboratory"*.

1981 (Part One)

BBC Radio 1 - Kid Jensen show

Before the LP 'Computer World' was released, Ralf Hütter was interviewed by the then Radio 1 DJ David 'Kid' Jensen. During this interview, Ralf basically outlined what the band had been doing over the previous three years, such as converting the studio to make it transportable.

One interesting and funny comment came when Ralf, in jest, speaking about the location of Kling Klang studio being near Düsseldorf railway station and why it is hard for their record label to contact them. *"The studio is in the centre of Düsseldorf near the railway station We just had to pop the microphone out the window to record 'Trans-Europe Express' "*.

The DJ had obviously not done his homework as he spoke about live concerts; *"It was something like three years since we last saw Kraftwerk on stage in Great Britain"*. (In fact it was five years - 1976.)

BBC Radio 1 - Tommy Vance

Recorded backstage at Kraftwerk's first British concert of 1981, in Manchester, DJ Tommy Vance was able to interview Ralf Hütter. This interview, like many from 1981, features comments about their transportable studio and the current popularity in electronic music and the synthesizer boom.

When talking about their last tour in 1976, Ralf came up with being attacked for what they were doing at that time. Ralf also mentioned what influences he had;

"We live in Düsseldorf, which is right next to Cologne and there's this electronic radio studio and they were putting out all these strange electronic sounds during the night and fairly at an early age we saw a couple of electronic performances by composers, of that school. So, to us it was the next step to do after classically working piano or flute, or anything, those instruments, then immediately going electronic."

In this very interesting interview, Tommy Vance asked as a viewer of the concert; *"Looking from the auditorium point of view you're all ... very similar people."*

Ralf replied; *"Yes, we all have the same size with our clothes. We can exchange clothes very well. Only, I think, Karl has bigger shoes!"* (Laughter from background.) *"(Karl and Wolfgang) sometimes they operate pedals because the loudness is done with foot pedals, so they move their feet quite a lot. I play different keyboards, I have four pedals so I might get a transplant and have another two feet extra!"*

After speaking about how sensitive their studio is on stage and how each dial could put each other out, Tommy Vance asked why they recorded in different languages;

"The Western World is dominated by Anglo-American speech. And us being German, so we had to learn other languages... We sometimes record our songs in different languages, French and now ... Japanese, we feel it changes our music completely, so we have different variations of our music and some of the languages go even better sometimes with our music than others."

In 1974, electronic music was to take one its greatest steps towards popularity The album responsible for this was of course AUTOBAHN. The music of the future or the past?

20 Years on the Autobahn

The 'Autobahn' LP under the spotlight, By B. Cassidy

The fact that 'Autobahn' is possibly Kraftwerk's most widely-issued album speaks for itself. The album is a monumental 'tour de force' in the genre of electronic music mainly because of its 22'42" title track. At its time of release it was much more appreciated outside of Germany, especially in the U.K. and the U.S., which is strange since what few lyrics were present were all in German! Before 'Autobahn' it was virtually unknown for a foreign band to be considered commercially viable if they sung in anything but English. Just another one of those things that we have come to expect Kraftwerk to dismiss...

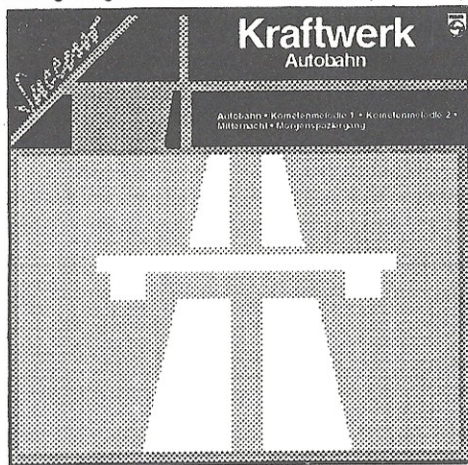
The 'Autobahn' LP was further evidence that Kraftwerk were truly committed to integrating electronics within their music. This is not to say that all traditional instrumentation had been abandoned at this time though, Florian's flutes are still as present as Ralf's organ and piano. Despite the presence of such old instruments it's the new-fangled equipment that really makes this album shine, even today. This album was born to be played whilst travelling on the motorway, it's the perfect accompaniment music. If you don't believe me try it yourself, preferably at night for optimum effect. As far as the development of group image and presentation, things had not progressed too much from previous LP's. The original German LP front cover featured the well known road scene painting by Emil Schult, which is quaint but befitting. More interesting though is the back of the LP, which shows the then current Kraftwerk line-up for the first time, all four of them positively *crammed* into the back seat of the Volkswagen Beetle, as featured on the front cover. In the mid-seventies this image was probably quite acceptable but looking at it now is a surreal experience, especially for one who is used to Kraftwerk's modern presentation, which certainly doesn't include long hair, great smiles and very odd looking items of clothing! On the other hand though, and in stark contrast, we have the U.K.

issue, which was quite simply an embossed reproduction of a blue and white motorway sign. This was much more fitting than the German issue and is in keeping with Kraftwerk's effective minimalism.

I'm almost positive that all of you who are reading have heard the 'Autobahn' album, and doubtless very fond of it. However, for the sake of information I have included some of my personal observations below on each individual track. The album as a whole has a much more consistent theme than any previous Kraftwerk albums, i.e. a journey on the motorway, but the music is anything but consistent....

'Autobahn', the title track which managed to create a modern sheen to the term electronic music and almost single-handedly props up the entire album. It could be said that this track is in fact several tracks which have been linked and interwoven, but take heed, it has been done with faultless skill. From the simple untreated stereo recording of someone entering a vehicle and driving into the distance, to the heavily synthesized, almost demonic, chants of "autobahn", the track starts as triumphantly as it finishes. From here onwards we are treated to subtle repetitive ditties which are obviously derived from classical ideas, mainly due to the presence of Florian's elegant flutes and pleasant guitar. What changes all this in to modern music though is the use of synthesis and droll German lyrics. Heavy synthesizer sweeps shoot from

one speaker to the other with an effective electronic percussion present throughout the track with a mechanical style that accompanies the thoughts of motorway travel perfectly. The German lyrics are mostly references to motorway scenery, but the most interesting part is its ever present 'verse' - 'Wir Fahr'n Fahr'n Fahr'n Auf Der Autobahn' (We Drive Drive Drive On The Autobahn) which sounds amazingly like 'Fun, Fun, Fun On The Autobahn', something I'm sure you've all noticed. I've



AUTOBAHN - ITALIAN RE-ISSUE LP, 1973

often wondered if Kraftwerk intended this or if it is just a bizarre coincidence. As the track progresses we see (sonically!) the music changing continuously from mood music to primitive electronic pop. Considering it's overall minimalism I still find it amazing that they dragged it out to over 20 minutes without making any of it boring. No mean feat, and it's a classic without doubt. Definitely one of the most important stepping stones in Kraftwerk's early career.

'Kometenmelodie 1/Kometenmelodie 2'; These two tracks follow on nicely from the majestic first track, probably due to the continuation of some of the same sounds and percussion, but are somehow less interesting. The first part being a slow rendition of the catchy second part. Both being simple crescendos of the musical scale, with the exception of a Status Quo like bass line in the much speeded up second part complete with its 'I've run out of octaves to play' finale. Both are very effective but the second part has dated a little and could be considered a bit corny or self indulgent, but it's all part of the fun that is to be had on a journey on the motorway! Such is Kraftwerk's humour...

'Mitternacht', or, as we English speakers say - midnight. This track is a bit of a throwback to the previous albums with its lack of solid musical structure, i.e. no decent tune! It is however atmospheric and thankfully only lasts for a few minutes. Some of the effects here are interesting with dog like 'howls' and electronic 'drips' but ultimately you can't wait for it to finish so you can witness the delights of...

'Morgenspaziergang', less commonly known as morning walk. This jolly offering is surprisingly nice, starting off with misleading fuzzy electronic radio-like effects this track evolves into pure classical music. Much presence is felt from the piano and flute each taking turn in playing a part of the lusciously indulgent melody. The music again, like most Kraftwerk offerings at any point, is complex yet simple. There's a lot going on most of the time yet the tune is amazingly minimal. It is the perfect curtain closer for an impressive album. It is harmonious, melodic and pleasant. It's also one of the last times that Kraftwerk were to use traditional instruments, perhaps it was a farewell track in more than one sense of the word.

That's it. The 'Autobahn' album in all its glory. There are not a lot of people I know who don't find it at least interesting. Even to the initiated the title track is still surreal and genuinely ground breaking, I mean, why on earth would four German guys want to sing along to electronic noises about driving on a motorway! You could never envisage that such an issue could be made as elegant and interesting as this, and that's the point of Autobahn. It's not pretentious, with any kind of hidden message to the world, it is what it is, an unbiased, barely informative musical journey. When listening to the album today you get the feeling that if it was recorded again it wouldn't sound the same, even if the same equipment was used. Like most early Kraftwerk albums it feels very 'live' in places, very 'human' even which gives this album an unrepeatable, singular feel. I could go on and on as to how this album in particular effected mid-seventies to late eighties pop but the results of time present themselves clearly in those eras. 'Autobahn' is timeless, to such a degree that I would warrant another write up on it in another 21 years time... □

AUTOBAHN TITBITS

'...I saw them around the time the second album was out. The music in the first part of the concert was played only by Ralf and Florian and it was the same basically as their records. But then two guitar players came on stage (I have forgotten their names) and they announced they would like to do a new piece called 'Autobahn'. Yes, they played the composition that early, in concert. And it was totally different from the recorded version that is out now. Heavy screeching guitars, very loud and hypnotic sounds emerging from the keyboards. A cross between John Cage and The Stooges. It was fantastic.'

(FROM EUROCK IV
(THE EUROPEAN ROCK FANZINE) 9/75)



AUTOBAHN COMPACT DISCS

CD issues of the album appeared in the mid-late eighties. The German issue (EMI Electrola, CDP 564-7461532) and the UK issue (EMI, CDP 7461532) are both extremely similar, mainly because the UK release copied the German artwork, even down to the fact that they have failed to remove the EMI Electrola logo from the packaging! (This version will be replaced by a re-issued version due just as this issue is going to print.) This is based on the 1985 re-issue cover for the front and the rear of the case has the black and white live pic, much darker and with track titles printed onto it. The insert features an elongated blue and white road sign design in its middle section.

The nicest CD to collect is probably the US edition, because it originally came packaged in the now discontinued 'long box' packaging. I believe that there are two issues on Elektra, cat no.'s 7559 60797-2 and 9 25326-2. The long box features one half of the 1985 re-issue cover on the front and the other half on the back. Inside, there is the standard CD case with similar packaging to the other CD releases. There is also a Japanese CD, EMI, CP32-5609, though I do not have much details about this issue.

The success of 'Autobahn', both the single and album, in the American charts ensured that the record would have been released in most parts of the world. With the American charts seen as the most lucrative and influential, it's a fair bet to say that achieving success there is to guarantee further exposure in other parts of the world. The record proves enduringly popular with collectors, not simply to add to their collection itself, but because I'm sure that in many cases this would have been the first taste of Kraftwerk and their 'industrielle volksmusik', never perhaps more aptly named than in this 22 minutes plus ode to the arteries of Germany's road system.

20 Years on the Autobahn - The Releases

A Collectors Corner look at the multitude of versions available to collectors, by IAC

AUTOBAHN SINGLES • The initial release of 'Autobahn' on a single was in the USA it seems. The influential and famous producer Conny Plank, who engineered the 'Autobahn' album (as well as earlier Kraftwerk LP's) had this interesting snippet of info on the single, when interviewed in 1975 for 'Record Mirror' magazine; *"It was the Chicago boss of Phonogram who cut the track down to three minutes. It was purely meant for radio promotion in the States but we were rather pleased when we heard it, that's exactly how we would have done it"*. It was a hit, perhaps with a certain novelty value - much column inches were devoted to the idea that it was some kind of Teutonic Beach Boys parody, based largely on the misinterpretation of the lyric to be heard as 'fun, fun, fun on the autobahn'. So, all single releases inevitably feature an edited version of the song. However, there are variations; the UK 7" single featured a chopped-up edit of the song, cramming a number of the various sections of the music into little over three minutes in length. The edit released on the US and German singles (which were adopted by the majority of other territories) feature a more sympathetic edit, that highlights one particular segment of the original opus. These then are the two main variations in edit. There are others though; the Spanish release for instance contains an edit that merely uses the first three and a quarter minutes of the track.

When it comes to the choice of B side, most territories chose 'Morgenspaziergang', also from the 'Autobahn' album. There are again some exceptions, the UK release in particular, which used 'Kometenmelodie' (Part I) instead. In general it seems that most countries issued a picture sleeve to accompany the single, with the UK, US, Canada and South Africa being the exceptions. If you come across any European issues, you can probably assume that it should come complete with a picture cover, unless it is a promo or test copy for instance. The majority of releases utilise the 'motorway painting' cover art of the album, though some of the later re-issues veered away from this design.

Re-releases appeared in the UK, France and Germany on 7" and the German and French releases are rather collectable; both feature 'Kometenmelodie 2' as well as 'Autobahn'. The French re-issue is particularly sought after because it has a picture sleeve that uses the bands 'traffic cone' design as per their first two LP's. In terms of prices, copies that come with picture sleeves are probably the most sought after. The German 7" is always in demand but prices vary a great deal for this; you could easily pay anywhere between £10-£25 for a copy. The French release is rarer and tends to start upwards of £18 or so. The Spanish and Italian releases rarely seem to be on sale, so prices for these tend to be at the sellers discretion. There are two versions of the UK issue; originals come with silver inked paper labels. Later pressings have silver inked plastic injection moulded labels. The later pressings you could well find for between £2.50-£5. The paper label versions will probably set you back upwards of £5, maybe as much as £10. Neither version has a picture cover. Neither do any of the American issues. Prices for these vary, but should remain well under a tenner. Promo copies may well come with a higher asking price.

AUTOBAHN ALBUMS • In terms of the sleeve artwork I think we can divide the majority of releases into four variants;

1. The original 'motorway painting' sleeve; this has the colourful autobahn landscape painting as produced by Emil Schult, with the Mercedes and Volkswagen cars on an otherwise deserted autobahn, stretching into the lush, verdant hills, flanked by electricity pylons and the rising sun. On the original, there is a portion of a dashboard seen at the bottom, as if our view is from the vantage point of the front seat of a car. This version has the rather dated band pic on the back cover; Ralf, Florian, Klaus Roeder and Wolfgang Flür crammed into the back seat of a Volkswagen Beetle. On some copies (Germany, France) the picture is colour tinted. On others (Australia, Holland) it is merely black and white.

2. Like the previously discussed release this uses the 'motorway painting' sleeve, but it has different graphics (USA, Japan, Canada) and some of the releases have a plain rear cover, with no band photo (Spain, later Japanese re-issue).

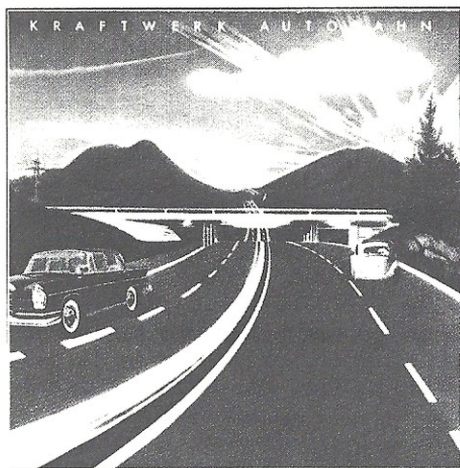
3. The 'road sign' illustration versions. In just blue and white, this has a reproduction of the familiar motorway road traffic sign we all know and love when driving down the motorway/autobahn/freeway/autopista (delete as appropriate). This was used for the original UK release and also on a later Italian re-issue.

4. The fourth version is what is used on all current releases. It is basically the original 'motorway painting' version, except that it has been updated now; the dashboard section at the foot of the sleeve has been removed altogether and the back of the sleeve features a black and white live pic of Kraftwerk c.1975/76. The inner sleeve to these versions feature the blue and white road sign illustration, so you get the best of both worlds! The lyric to the song, printed on original covers, has also been deleted.

These are merely a rough grouping; most releases vary in some small way from one to the next. For instance, there are at least four Japanese vinyl LP issues to be found, all different in some way from each other! Then you get something like the Korean issue, which resembles no other, what with its lack of Mercedes Benz! All versions of the LP, as far as I know, come with the same music on them, so collecting these items is essentially to do with their visual appeal.

From the collectors point of view the German pressing of the LP seems to be always in demand. US and Canadian copies also seem to be asked a high price of. Otherwise, there is no general trend to collectability and pricing. Original copies of the LP on the Vertigo/Philips/Mercury labels tend to sell roughly between £15-£25. UK copies seem to start upwards of £8 or so.

The first draft of this article listed all of the versions that I know of thus far for both singles and albums. Needless to say, it was quite some length! So, we'll take a look at a small selection of some of the more unusual and/or appealing of the releases available...



1985 RE-ISSUE SLEEVE DESIGN

One of the old chestnuts that has been repeated over and over throughout the years is that Kraftwerk were so hard up that they sold the rights of the 'Autobahn' LP to their record company for a paltry \$2000. This quote, from the US Billboard magazine (22.3.75) is typical; *The story goes that Phonogram's German A&R director bought their tape master without hearing it when told the asking price was only \$2000.*

This quote from Rolling Stone magazine (3.7.95) reveals the true facts behind this; *'Hütter and Schneider don't intend to make the same kind of deal they did back in 1971, when they sold the entire rights to 'Kraftwerk', the first of their European albums, to Philips records (a Phonogram subsidiary) for \$2000.'*

So it's not 'Autobahn' that was sold off cheap, but the 'Kraftwerk' LP.

Mystery surrounds the intended 1982 UK re-issue of the 'Autobahn' album. It was announced in the UK press in April 1982 that *'the new Kraftwerk album, as yet untitled, will be issued on May 10 - and on the same date their 'Autobahn' set appears on the EMI label for the first time'*. It is even listed in record release books too. As far as I know, it never appeared though - haven't seen any copies for sale, or spotted it in anybody's collection list. Its allocated catalogue number is EMC3405. Yet another little Kraftwerk mystery.

Debate about the slamming door and engine start-up noises heard at the start of the song suggest that the noises are from an older Mercedes Benz diesel model (probably a 180, possibly a 600; a French magazine article from 1978 mentioned Kraftwerk's use of a Mercedes Benz 600. Not a VW !

1. GERMAN ORIGINAL RELEASE (PHILIPS, 6003 438)

One of the nicest 7" examples, this has an excellent, colour picture sleeve, the front of which has the 'motorway painting' sleeve art, but with larger, more prominent graphics in white. The sleeve makes much of the fact that it had already been a hit in the US; both front and back carry the 'US top LP' legend. The rear is mainly black with the blue and white 'road sign' logo. The edit used for this release is a 3.23 cut, the same as the edit used on the American 7" single. The slamming door and engine start up noises are rapidly joined by the music fading in. This edit does not cram as many of the various sections of the song into it as the UK one does and possibly benefits from this approach. The B side of the single is 'Morgenspaziergang'. There is a promo release too. Same music and such, but the labels are different and there's no picture sleeve. Much rarer.

2. SPANISH 7" (VERTIGO 61 47 009)

This single does not appear for sale all that often. (It was recently spotted with a price of 175Dm in one catalogue!) The edit of the song on the disc is different to that used on the UK and German/US releases. It is in fact the first 3 minutes and 16 seconds or so of the LP version, so you get the full intro, with the electronic voice, which is largely edited out of the US/German edit. Further description of this release can be found in the Spanish 'Collectors Corner' article elsewhere in this issue.

3. JAPAN (VERTIGO SFL-2023)

The Japanese 7" is probably the rarest example of 'Autobahn' on single, if you base this decision on the criteria of how often copies appear for sale. Not a lot of these going about nowadays! In actual fact, it is not all that different in comparison to other releases, certainly in comparison to the differences that later Japanese issues employed. With this being a Japanese release it comes with the record housed in a company sleeve, inside a thin plastic bag with a full colour picture insert. This insert features the same pic and graphics as the front of the German 7". In addition there are extra Japanese script graphics in red and white. The reverse of the insert is white with black text. It also has a small reproduction of the Japanese LP cover too.

4. FRANCE, 1976 RE-ISSUE 7" (VERTIGO, 6147 017)

A very appealing and in-demand 7" single, chiefly because of the picture sleeve design. The front features the familiar 'traffic cone' logo to be found on the bands first two German LP's, so this sleeve very much resembles a miniaturised version of 'Kraftwerk 1'. Cute. The rear of the sleeve, is like the original French 7" release of this single, plain white with just a large Vertigo logo. Prices for this 7" tend to be sky-high, I've seen £65 asked for this in the past. More realistically, you will probably be looking at a minimum of £20 for a copy, unless its your lucky day. In actual fact, 'Kometenmelodie 2' is the A side of this single, 'Autobahn' the flip. This time around, the UK edit of the track is used, not the German/US edit that was used for the original French 7". (Sleeve illustration can be found in issue 6, page 43.)

5. THAILAND (4 TRACK STEREO RECORDS, FT223)

Definitely a contender for the most unusual appearance of 'Autobahn' on a 7" is a release from Thailand. A four track 7" EP, it features the German/US edit as the fourth track. The other three tracks are; 'One More Tomorrow' by Henry Gross, 'You Need Love' by Styx and 'Bloody Well Right' by Supertramp. Hmmm... Even less of a sympathetic bed-mate is that the picture cover features a colour pic of Status Quo on the front!

6. UK 7" (VERTIGO, 6147 012)

Last but not least, the humble UK issue. OK, so there's no pic sleeve but it does feature the unmistakable UK edit. Realistically, you're unlikely to come across that snazzy little French 7" with the traffic cone sleeve, so if you want to get the same edit that's on that, but cheaper, then buy the UK issue. Yup, the same edit that you've probably heard on the rare occasions that you actually hear 'Autobahn' played on the radio. The UK single has 'Kometenmelodie 1' as its B side, which is another oddity. Original copies have paper labels, later ones plastic moulded labels. The choice is yours.

If you really must have a picture sleeve, then you could go for the rather tacky re-issue that appeared in 1981 (Vertigo 'Classic Cuts' series, CUT108). Debate still rages on as to whether it is a UK issue pressed in France or a full blown French release. Whatever, it features the UK edit of 'Autobahn' on one side and 'Classical Gas' by Vertigo stablemates Beggars Opera on the other. The picture sleeve has a Classic Cuts design - it's in issue 5 on page 37 if you want to see it.

■ It has also been mentioned that there is a 1986 US 12" promo single with 'Autobahn' on it, released to stir up some extra interest in the 'Electric Cafe' LP, but as yet I have no further information to qualify this as real. If it does exist, then you can certainly bet it will be collectable. Anybody with any info, please get in touch.

1. UK ORIGINAL ISSUE (VERTIGO 6360 620)

If you're going to add a vinyl copy of 'Autobahn' to your collection then why not start with the original UK issue? This has the blue and white 'road sign' sleeve, which was unique to the UK. The earlier copies have a 'raised surface' effect, so that the road sign stands out a bit on the sleeve. The labels feature the colourful 'spaceship' Vertigo design. Obviously the later, flat textured sleeves will not be worth quite as much; in theory, anyway. The rear of the cover is like the front (so there is no band pic at all on this issue) but with all the track details, credits etc. and even the songs lyrics.

2. ORIGINAL GERMAN ISSUE (PHILIPS, 6305 231)

The original German issue has the much more colourful 'motorway painting' sleeve to the front and the 'band in the back seat of a Beetle' pic on the rear, tinted in colour. In actual fact, there's a bit of photographic trickery going on; only Wolfgang Flür's head is in the picture; the body belongs to Emil Schult! There is a blue and white 'road sign' sticker on the front cover too. Most copies have dark blue paper labels with silver print, but there are also copies with black labels too, which are probably rarer. Original releases can tend to be a bit pricey. Also worth pointing out is that the record cover is very glossy, but this kind of laminate can peel off in places, with age, so watch for that if buying. Promo copies of the LP also exist, with white label 'Musterplatte' designs. These are far scarcer and thus more expensive.

3. ITALIAN RE-ISSUE (PHILIPS, 9279 459)

The original Italian release (Philips, 6305 231) has much in common with the German issue. Far more interesting is a later re-issue in the 'Successo'/Rock Giants series (Philips, 9279 459). This has a totally altered sleeve; the back cover reveals a number of the other releases in the series, so the covers for all resemble each other in terms of layout. The graphics are totally different from any other 'Autobahn' release and the graphic element used is the blue and white 'road sign' design, as per the UK. The rear has a large amount of text, mainly an essay on Kraftwerk, woven into the design along with small reproductions of other releases in the series. These differences add up to an very appealing collectable, the scarcity and price reflecting this; find a copy first, then worry about the price! You can see a pic of this cover on page 30.

4. KOREAN LP (CAPUZ/SHILLA, SCL-1023)

If you want a really different angle then look out for 'The World Of Kraftwerk'. I believe this is a Korean release. Something of an oddity, it is actually the 'Autobahn' LP, given this new title. The sleeve is a bit different too; it has the 'motorway painting' pic as per the 1985 re-issues but the Mercedes has been removed! The back cover features a lightened image of the front with all the titles/credits over this. There are some misprints in these credits; Frolian Schneider?! There is a sticker on the rear too with the track titles in both English and Korean I think. Amongst a section of the Korean text at the top of this box the word *Technopop* stands out! The small print at the bottom mentions that the LP has passed censorship by The Ministry of Culture Information - maybe it was they who didn't approve of the Mercedes!

5. AUSTRALIAN EMI RE-ISSUE (EMI EMC 203)

The original Australian/New Zealand issue (Vertigo) resembles the German LP, but the back pic is black and white, not tinted. Stranger though is a later issue from this quarter; the Australian/New Zealand issue on EMI. This appeared long before the 1985 re-issues (I bought my own copy in January of 1984 for instance, but it had already been available for a while.). More intriguingly, the sleeve is as per the original release, with the rather dated band pic still present and correct on the rear. However the record is on EMI (EMC 203) and has cream coloured EMI design labels. Quite why this re-issue sneaked out before the amended 1985 one is a mystery. One wonders if it is the same as was the intended 1982 re-issue by EMI in the UK? A UK re-issue on EMI was first announced for release in May of 1982 but it was not until 1985 that such a release appeared... So, this release may well be the only example of an EMI release in the original, unamended sleeve design.

6. ORIGINAL JAPANESE RELEASE (VERTIGO RJ 7010)

Dating from 1975, this has the 'motorway painting' sleeve design but it has different graphics for the titles on the front. There is also an additional insert sheet which features extensive Japanese text and also a couple of early live pictures of Ralf and Florian too. Japanese releases are always collectable, so this is another LP that will probably be pricey, later Japanese albums seem to have a habit of selling for upwards of £20, so you would expect this to cost at least the same, if not more so. There are actually two more such Japanese releases from the 70's; Vertigo, BT5191 is a re-issue from 1978 as part of a 'Rock Super Collection' series, same series but with a different insert sheet; Philips, BT8103 is a re-issue from 1979, this time there is no band pic on the back, it being replaced with text in Japanese, so there's no insert either.

'Autobahn', with its place in Kraftwerk history as their most famous and well known track, appears on all of the various compilation albums milked by their various record companies from their early era, except for one of the French LP's ('A Tout Collection'). These LP's use a variety of edits of the track. There is a French double compilation LP that even has the title of 'Autobahn'. Similarly, a German compilation in the Pop Lions series borrows this title too. Even odder, there is the Italian LP that crams all of the 'Autobahn' LP AND 'Kohoutek 1' onto one side of an LP, with 'Kraftwerk 2' on the other! Needless to say, most of the tracks are severely edited. Further details on these unusual and rather hard to find LP's can be found in the article 'Compilation and on and on...', originally featured in issue 2, now to be found in updated form in the 'Retro 1' issue. In addition, you can expect 'Autobahn' to also turn on various artists compilation LPs too, since it was an international hit, but these would be too numerous to list here, quite apart from the fact that we don't know the half of them anyway! □



The line-up that recorded the 'Autobahn' LP - Klaus Roeder, Ralf Hütter, Wolfgang Flür, Florian Schneider

Like all other groups, live recordings of Kraftwerk have always been in circulation and sought after by fans eager to hear the band's live renditions of familiar material. In recent times CD's have taken the place of live tapes to a large extent, with the better quality ones (and, let's be fair, rather poor quality ones too) gaining wide circulation. Yet live tapes remain in circulation and are eagerly swapped between collectors interested in hearing the long-gone tones of earlier Kraftwerk material.

Live tapes - the 'Autobahn' era

by Ferric Bias

A lot of the earlier tapes have of course been copied so many times that their sound quality has deteriorated. Many of the comments in this article may be along the lines of 'hissy, dull sound but otherwise well balanced'; this is intended to indicate that although the quality has become obscured, the actual original sound of the recording is OK; not overly distorted or of 'tinny' (no bass at all) quality. In general, it appears to be the case that the earlier the recording, the poorer quality tends to be. Roughly speaking, none of the tapes in this article are of particularly good sound quality, excepting perhaps the 1975 Cologne radio broadcast, and many are very poor in terms of sound quality.

In many cases, there appears to be only the one particular recording of a concert that seems to be in wide circulation. This applies mainly to gigs from the earlier period of Kraftwerk's live history. As time has gone by, and the required technology has become smaller, there are now usually multiple recordings from a single gig, which will make an article such as this more difficult to write for later gigs. This article takes a look at the tapes that exist from the period after the release of the 'Autobahn' LP, when the band expanded to a four piece live combo and embarked on their first extensive series of live dates.

LEVERKUSEN - 24.4.74/75? - DATE UNCERTAIN - 2x60

Audience recording, reasonably well balanced sound, though a bit boomy in the bass department. Quite quiet overall, which exaggerates the tape hiss a bit. Audience can be heard in the quieter moments, but not too dominant. The date of this concert is a source of mystery. Information suggests that the German 'Autobahn' tour took place much later in 1974 (October and/or November), thus contradicting the above date. However, the recording does not feature any audible guitars but there is plenty of xylophone so I think we can safely assume that it is in fact Karl Bartos as the fourth band member and not Klaus Roeder, which would place this recording in the 1975 time frame.

Remarkable for the fact that so many songs are played, hence the gig is a long one. The version of what is known as 'Kling Klang' is quite freeform and quite impressive; features in parts a very heavy rhythm, an early example of Kraftwerk's future influence on house music perhaps! Musically, the track is a mix of synths, xylophone(!), echoed flute and such. Reminiscent in parts to some of 'Ralf and Florian'; 'Tongebirge' / 'Heimatklänge'. The xylophone can also be heard on the following track, 'Ruckzuck', Karl Bartos displaying the fruits of his labours at the Düsseldorf conservatory perhaps. The version of 'Kometenmelodie' begins as per the LP version and thus does not feature the vocoder/organ/bells intro detailed later in this article. Just as part 2 of 'Kometenmelodie' starts, the synths seem to go out of tune with one another, which prompts a few moments of synth retuning. The xylophone can also be heard again on this track and also a rather free-form, extended outing of 'Tanzmusik', that sounds almost middle of the road, with its tinkling xylophone touches and keyboard flourishes lending something of a kitsch cocktail bar backing music feel! Certainly very different from the LP version, with a far wider scope for improvisation, working around the main melody of the song. The version of 'Autobahn' seems to last forever, a rather extended rendition of the track.

The version of 'Mitternacht' is unusual in that immediately before and after it there is a rather rhythmic piece of music based unmistakably on the tune of 'Showroom Dummies', mutating into bass-keyboard driven free-form piece. The tape finishes with a rarely heard live version of 'Morgenspaziergang', the additional rhythm of which gives the track a predominately waltz-time signature. It then mutates into an improvised section reminiscent of the first track!

('Kling Klang', 'Ruckzuck', 'Kometenmelodie' (1 & 2), 'Autobahn', 'Tanzmusik', improvised 'Mitternacht', 'Tongebirge', 'Morgenspaziergang'.)

Released on the 'Kometenmelodie' bootleg LP and the 'Cologne 1975' bootleg CD. Good quality recording, originally from radio broadcast, though incomplete. One of the most well known of Kraftwerk's concert recordings. A good example of the Kraftwerk live sound of the period, the version of 'Ruckzuck' is probably the best track. Some pretty serious noise reduction has been utilised to kill the hiss on the LP/CD copies. The recording is in stereo which is another major plus and certainly differentiates it from the majority of the other tapes here. Well recommended.

('Ruckzuck', 'Kometenmelodie 1', 'Kometenmelodie 2', 'Autobahn').

There also exists a longer recording of this gig, but not in such good quality.

('Ruckzuck', 'Kometenmelodie 1', 'Kometenmelodie 2', 'Autobahn', 'Tanzmusik', 'Mitternacht', 'Tongebirge', 'Morgenspaziergang').

CHICAGO - 5/75 - C90

Originally broadcast on WXP radio I believe, if the MC heard at the start of the tape is anything to go by. An interesting recording of 'Mitternacht' opens the show - the track is as the LP arrangement to begin with before, once again, the melody of 'Showroom Dummies' breaks in after a minute or two. This theme continues on and changes, having distinct similarities, particularly the sounds, to portions of 'Kristallo', from the 'Ralf and Florian' LP. As the tune progresses, some of the music sounds very similar, particularly the fast bass line rhythm, to the 1981 live version of 'Showroom Dummies'! As per the 1981 rendition, the track ends with the tune of 'Mitternacht' played once more at the songs end! All a good six years before the 1981 tour arrangement! Funny how Kraftwerk work sometimes...

Sound quality of the copy I have heard has become muddy with being copied so much. I would presume that a good quality recording from the original radio broadcast would be an excellent document of Kraftwerk's live performance from this period of time.

('Mitternacht'/improvised, 'Ruckzuck', 'Kometenmelodie 1', 'Kometenmelodie 2', 'Tanzmusik', 'Autobahn', 'Kling Klang'(Excerpt))

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, Keystone - 11/5/75 - USA - C90

Audience recording. Hissy, dull sound quality throughout. Interesting in that once again it sounds as if Karl Bartos is playing a Xylophone/Vibraphone type instrument, which gives some of the tracks a far more different feel, esp. 'Tanzmusik'. Microphone adjustment heard in several places throughout the recording.

('Kling Klang', 'Tanzmusik', 'Ruckzuck' (cut), 'Kometenmelodie 1 & 2' (cut), 'Autobahn' (cut))

LONDON, Royal Festival Hall - 1/9/75 - ENGLAND, UK - C90

Mixing desk recording, in stereo, but over the generations the quality has deteriorated; plays a bit slow and is a bit distorted in places. Whether this is present on the original master recording or whether it has been inherited over the generations of copies is unclear. If a good quality copy exists it would make this an interesting document of the version of 'Kometenmelodie', this being the version which features an alternative intro with rather melodramatic vocoded vocals, church bells and somewhat gothic organ. Quite what the significance of this intro is was unknown to me to begin with but Gunther Poecker explains it thus;

'The German text used as the 'Kometenmelodie' intro in the '75 concerts is from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 'Faust' I. (Probably the most famous German author/dramatist/artist/genius, he lived in the 18th century.) This is probably from an LP with the drama, but is processed through a vocoder. The piece is from 'Faust' I, Prologue in the Heavens. Angel Raphael says these lines;

*'Die Sonne toent nach alter Weise,
In Brudersphaeren Wettgesang,
Und ihre vorgeschriebne Reise,
Vollendet sie mit Donnerang.'*

This describes the path of the sun during the day and it serves here to show the greatness of nature as made by God.'

The vocoded vocal is also present at the very beginning of the recording, because this concert begins with the familiar intro that the band still introduce their shows with to this very day. (The '*Ladies and Gentlemen, Heute Abend, aus Deutschland, Die Mensch Maschine, Kraftwerk*' intro!)

('Kling Klang', 'Tongebirge', 'Tanzmusik', 'Ruckzuck', 'Kometenmelodie 1&2')

BRIGHTON, The Dome - 17/9/75 - ENGLAND, UK - C90

Audience recording. Hissy, muddy sound but otherwise well balanced. No serious distortion. A good version of the track introduced as 'Kling Klang'. Performances of this period feature a mostly improvised track at the start of the concert which is very good; Ralf can quite clearly be heard to introduce it as 'Kling Klang' and the bell chimes and clangs that are on the LP version are present and correct too at its start; however, the rest of the music sounds so unlike the LP version of 'Kling Klang' that it can scarcely be counted as such. A track that, if a studio version exists, would be worthy of release in some kind of retrospective collection. This is a particularly good version of it anyway.

('Kling Klang', 'Tongebirge', 'Tanzmusik', 'Kometenmelodie 1&2', 'Autobahn'.)

PARIS, FRANCE - 28.2.76

From a radio broadcast, the sound quality is quite good. There is a French DJ who speaks over portions of the tracks, especially 'Kometenmelodie' Part 1. This track is preceded by the electronic voice intro from 'Faust' detailed earlier in this article. In general, the performance is quite minimal, the sounds devoid of any kind of live ambience, presumably straight into the mixer. The version of 'Tanzmusik' is once again quite free-form, with the main melody of the song, as well as the electronic rhythm, the only real connection to the original.

('Autobahn' (start missing), 'Kling Klang' (excerpt), 'Kometenmelodie' (Parts 1 and 2), 'Tongebirge', 'Tanzmusik')

Unfortunately there are no recordings from any of the shows that the band performed in late 1976 that have as yet entered wide circulation. This is particularly unfortunate as the band performed versions of songs from both the 'Radioactivity' and 'Trans-Europe Express' LP's at these concerts. In particular, these are the only known occasions when versions of 'Europe Endless' and 'Airwaves' (or 'Antenna') have been performed live by the band. □

No sooner had issue 6 appeared than some relevant info appeared. There are some inaccuracies to clear up as well. Starting with 7" releases; in addition to the three versions from 1976 and promo issue from 1991, there are two more issues of 'Radioactivity' as a single. The first, from 1979, is in a 'Music In Gold' re-issue series;

Radioactivity (Edit) (3.18) / Les Mannequins (Edit) (2.30), Capitol, 2S 008 85853 (Music In Gold series, No.21)

The picture sleeve is mainly gold coloured but with the familiar 'Radioactivity' LP sleeve design used on the front, but with the obvious title amendments. The back cover lists the rest of the releases in the series. The other release that has come to light is another one in a series of re-issues, this time called 'Dance For Ever', from 1985;

Radioactivity (Edit) (3.18) / Antenna (Edit) (3.05), EMI Pathe-Marconi, 1561287 ('Dance For Ever' series, Vol.38)

The picture sleeve for this uses the first version of the 1976 French picture sleeve as the main graphic, tilted slightly on the front of the sleeve, with a border visible and the 'Dance For Ever' logo at the top. The rear is black and white with a list of the other releases in the series. There are also copies of the original 1976 7" release of 'Radioactivity' that have red plastic injection-moulded labels, as opposed to the normal paper label designs. In the article in issue 6, I speculated that the Dutch pressing of 'The Telephone Call' doubled also as the French release. This may possibly have been the case but there is in fact a home-grown French pressing available;

The Telephone Call (Remix)(3.47) / Der Telefon Anruf (Remix)(3.47), EMI/Pathe-Marconi, 2016377

Sleeve design is as per the majority of other issues. The record itself has silver, injection moulded plastic labels. Also worth pointing out is that there are also promo copies, with top corner of the sleeve stamped with a promo logo, for 'The Telephone Call'. There are also such variants for 'Tour De France' and 'Musique Non Stop';

Moving onto 12" singles, I am pleased to give more details on the 1984 re-issue 12" of 'Tour De France',

*Tour De France (Version Française) (N Y Club Mix) (6.44) / Tour De France (Version Allemande) (N Y Club Mix) (6.44)
EMI Pathe-Marconi 1545236*

The sleeve design is as per normal, other than track listing amendments. It is the music where the interest lies; side one contains the version of the track that is the first track on the B side of the UK 1984 12" re-issue. The B side is the same music but has the German language lyric. This release finally proved that there was a German language version of one of the 1984 remixes; the confusion stems from the fact that there must be mispressings of the 1984 German re-issue 12"; while the sleeves and label refer to the Version Allemande, it is the French Version that appears on the record in, at least, most instances. Presumably then, there are versions of the German 12" that contain the correct 'Version Allemande'.

There are some more details on the LP front too; details on the 'Kraftwerk 1' LP were vague. I can now confirm that the cat. no. was correct and that the record does indeed come in a single, not gatefold, sleeve. The rear of the cover is the same as per the 'Kraftwerk 2' LP described in the original article., save for the colour of the traffic cone logo and credits etc.

There is also a French issue of the 'Exceller 8' compilation on Vertigo from 1975; 'Exceller 8', Vertigo 6360 629

The sleeve is as per the UK version, except that it does not have the three sleeve illustrations on the rear of the sleeve that the UK one has. The labels are the 'spaceship' design logo. The cat. no. of the original release of 'Computer World' is 2C 070-64370. The one listed in the article is a later pressing. There is also a third version on the Fame budget price imprint, from 1988. It is like previous versions but does not come with an inner sleeve;

Computer World, Fame / EMI Pathe-Marconi 1643701

Finally, there is now details of the French issue of the 'Electric Cafe' LP. In terms of packaging, it is as per the standard layout, with the gatefold sleeve and inner sleeve;

Electric Cafe, EMI/Pathe-Marconi PM264 24 0644 1

Thanks to José García Corral, Stéphane Dunner, Gunther Poecker for the info in this section

Throughout Kraftwerk's career there have been many rumours of tours, record releases and other such projects that, though talked of in interviews, have never materialised. The most obvious example is the cancelled release of the 'Technopop' album back in 1983, which has entered into almost mythic status amongst fans, something of a holy grail almost. Towards the end of the 1980's, when the gap since the release of 'Electric Cafe' seemed increasingly significant, rumours abounded of Kraftwerk having 'destroyed' the master tapes for a new album. As we shall see within this article, such speculation goes back some time and is not always helped by the lack of clarification from the band themselves...

THE K-FILES

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

The more mysterious side of Kraftwerk; cancelled releases, experimental projects etc.

UNRELEASED RECORDS

'Technopop' is obviously the most famous example of this type. 'Technopop' was the name given to Kraftwerk's 1983 album of songs that was scheduled for release towards the middle of the year. The LP had been anticipated for some time by the bands record labels EMI (UK) / EMI-Electrola (Germany). Kraftwerk themselves had been talking of the project since at least early 1982, it being mentioned in numerous interviews. In the NME of 5.2.83 it was reported that "...Kraftwerk will be playing some UK concerts in the early Spring. They're being set up for late March and early April and details are expected shortly. The visit will coincide with the release by EMI of their new studio album titled 'Technopop'...". By late April it became clear that the album and tour were not going to appear as soon as predicted, with the following report carried in the NME of 30.4.83 revealing that "Kraftwerk will not now be touring here this spring, even though some ticket agencies have actually been taking reservations for projected London concerts. It seems their new album won't be completed for some time, so their visit has been put off until early autumn."

In Germany there was even a press advert for the 'Technopop' LP, in a freebie music shop magazine. This advert, originally featured in colour on the back page of the magazine, is reproduced on the cover of this issue. Whether this advert is an example of the intended picture sleeve design is unclear; it seems that mock-up draft copies utilising this design were used by EMI company reps when visiting shops. This design borrows the 'Kraftwerk-on-bikes' illustration used, more aptly, on the preceding 'Tour De France' single for the front, with one of the pictures of the band performing 'Mini Calcolatore' from an Italian TV appearance from 1981 on the rear. 'Tour De France' was of course one of the intended tracks for inclusion on 'Technopop', along with 'Technopop' itself, 'Sex Object' and 'The Telephone Call'. In the UK the allocated catalogue number for the LP was EMC-3407, while the German press advert reveals that their catalogue numbers were 1C 064-65087 for the LP and 1C 264-65087 for the cassette release.

So what happened to 'Technopop'? Obviously, it was never released in its original form. The most logical answer from Kraftwerk themselves suggests that they were unhappy with the albums recordings at the time and continued to work on the songs until they were eventually happy with them. By which time they had moved from analogue to digital technology and the album had mutated from being called 'Technopop' into the now more familiar 'Electric Cafe' instead and, as far as the songs go, gaining 'Electric Cafe' while 'Technopop' spawned two additional derivative tracks, 'Boing Boom Tschak' and 'Musique Non Stop' and with 'Tour De France' being omitted altogether.

From an interview from the German magazine Frontpage in 1991 Ralf was asked 'Is it true that a complete finished LP was destroyed?'. "Not destroyed, but deleted. This 'Techno Pop' LP was practically finished, but we've re-recorded it."

For a long while rumours persisted that copies of the LP had been pressed, though in extremely limited numbers. No credible proof of this was forthcoming until the plot thickened somewhat in 1992 when demo versions of 'Technopop' and 'Sex Object' appeared on bootleg CD's. From knowledgeable sources, it appears that these recordings are not actually from a finished LP copy, but are rough demo takes, leaked by two people from one of the American studios used during the LP's

recording. It is probable that many such tapes exist within the confines of Kling Klang studio and associated personnel, but it still remains doubtful that any actual vinyl LP copies are in existence with the label bearing the name of 'Technopop'. But the Kraftwerk history tends to be so mysterious, it would not come as a shock to be proved wrong on this one...

'Technopop' is not the only example of this kind though. A release that was to appear in 1979 has also been mentioned. In an interview in the Spanish 'Popular 1' magazine with Ralf Hütter, conducted some months before the publication date, reveals comments that Florian, Karl and Wolfgang were then in the studio finishing the mix of a new album, due for release in April 1979. The magazine had intended that the interview should coincide with the release of the new album, but published the interview in November of 1979 when, with no signs of the LP arriving, they could wait no longer. The band turned down an opportunity to appear on the local Catalanian channel TV programme 'Musical Express' because they were working to finish the new album. They had even cancelled a European tour, according to what Ralf said. When asked about the new LP Ralf was very vague and the only explanation given to the interviewer about it is that "the recording conditions of the new album have been the same as previous ones". (Kraftwerk were again invited onto the same music programme in 1981 but again refused. The programme this time was about electronic music and featured live, not playback, performances by Neuronium, Klaus Schulze, Ashra, Vangelis and some video material from Tangerine Dream and Jean Michel Jarre.)

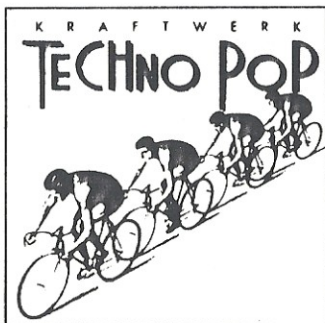
Certainly, there seems to be some substance to this idea, because it prompted a response from Ralf in an official EMI promo interview circulated at the time of 'Computer World's' release; 'Are the rumours true that you've destroyed a finished record because you were not satisfied, respectively because another group did a similar project earlier?' "We've worked three years [on this new record. ...] I don't know anything about these rumours." On the other hand, Ralf has often stated in interviews throughout the years that the band members are currently hard at work on a new album, with no resulting release to qualify such statements. As Ralf's answer implies, it may simply be that 'Computer World' absorbed what may have been intended as an earlier LP release.

Similarly, towards the end of the 1980's there were further rumours that Kraftwerk had recorded an LP and then destroyed the master tapes. From Select magazine in 1990; 'Kraftwerk were last in the news in Spring '89, when there was a strong rumour that they had destroyed all the material for a new LP, after deciding not to release it. "We would never do anything

KRAFTWERK SPRING VISIT

It was confirmed this week that Kraftwerk will be playing some UK concerts in the early spring. They're being set up for late March and early April, and details are expected shortly. The visit will coincide with the release by EMI of their new studio album titled 'Technopop', their first since 'Computer World' was issued in 1981.

KRAFTWERK will not now be touring here this spring, even though some ticket agencies have actually been taking reservations for projected London concerts. It seems their new album won't be completed for some time, so their visit has been put off until early autumn.



TRUCKS - EUROPE EXPRESS

Tracks: / Europe endless / Hall of mirrors. / Showroom dummies / Trans - Europe express / Metal on metal / Franz Schubert / Endless endless.

Album: Feb '82/Del Feb '87 Capitol
Album: Jun '86/Del '88 Fame
Case: '85/Del '88 Capitol
Album: '85/Del '88 Capitol
Case: Jun '86/Del '88 Fame
CD: May '87 EMI

MAN MACHINE

Tracks: / Robots / Spacelab / Metropolis / Model. The / Neon lights / Man machine.

Case: Mar '85 Fame
Album: Mar '85 Fame
CD: Jul '88 Fame
Case: Mar '85 Fame
Album: Mar '85 Fame
Album: May '78/Del May '83 Capitol

COMPUTER WORLD

Tracks: / Pocket calculator / Numbers / Computer world / Computer love / It's more fun to compute / Home computer.

Album: May '81 EMI
Case: May '81 EMI

TECHNO POP

Tracks: / Techno pop / Sex object / Telephone call / Tour de France.

Album: May '83/Del May '88 EMI

ELECTRIC CAFE

Tracks: / Bong boom Ischak / Techno pop / Musique non stop / Telephone call, The / Sex object / Electric cafe.

CD: Dec '86 EMI
Case: Nov '86/Del Jun '88 EMI
Album: Nov '86 EMI

ROBOTS

... Capitol / ... EMI

like a 'Black Album'", said a band spokesman, referring to the Prince album that never was. "For us it is satisfaction to know what the new Kraftwerk album is like". The same article mentions that, due to the unofficial tape recordings that were made at the concert, '...Kraftwerk are to release an 'official bootleg' of one of the gigs'. This may be confused with 'The Mix', which Kraftwerk themselves appear to regard as being something of a live album in itself.

Such reports do coincide with a period when the rumour on the grapevine was that an LP called 'Inspector' was to be preceded by a single called 'Rendezvous'. Again, no actual evidence of such releases are available. These titles still pop-up in conversation amongst fans, with the rumours mutating into new variations on the familiar theme.

Since 1991 there has been speculation of a follow-up to 'The Mix', a second volume of re-recorded songs called 'The Mix 2'. It is known that Ralf revealed that the band had also recorded versions of 'Neon Lights' and 'The Man Machine' for inclusion on 'The Mix', but which were left off of the eventual release. Despite numerous hoaxes suggesting otherwise, no LP matching the purported contents of 'The Mix 2' has appeared as yet and I would recommend that you believe it only when you see it! Comments from Ralf such as this one (from an article entitled 'Kraftwerk' sind wieder unter Strom' from the Swiss 'Blick' newspaper (27.07.1991)) only confuse matters; 'Another remix record can be expected. Ralf told BLICK: "We've remixed some other songs, too." And next year a new record shall appear with new songs". ' Similarly, in an interview printed in the NME, July 1991, Ralf answers, asked about the obvious omission of 'The Model' from 'The Mix', that "maybe in a couple of years we'll do another album like this". As yet, 'The Mix 2' is all just talk.

'The Mix' clearly showed that Kraftwerk were still in business after all and, apart from 'The Mix 2', expectations of a brand new album of material were also raised. Again, it exists only in theory. From an interview in the German magazine 'Frontpage' (7-8/1991), Ralf is asked 'Millions of fans are waiting for a new record...' to which he answers, "Yes, it will appear. After the tour. [... We can't play new songs live] without having released a record, otherwise [...] we would have hundreds of bootlegs".

With 1991 witnessing Kraftwerk's return from a lengthy period of silence rumour also spread of them releasing a box set. A radio interview with Ralf Hütter and Olaf Zimmermann on the German radio station DT 64 (pt. 1: 28.08.91, pt. 2: 11.09.91, pt. 3-4: dates unknown) touched upon this subject; 'Will your first three albums be re-released on CD?' "Well, we must go into the archives and look if we're still able to find the master tapes. Then we can copy the tapes on CD. Maybe after the tour, when we're back in Düsseldorf. We can certainly do that. [...] We think also about compiling a box set next year, with the singles, but in a different form." A report in the German 'Audio' magazine (10/91) stated that 'In autumn, the original albums will appear in a CD box (set)'. The only box set to appear thus far is the rather poor 'Capitol Years' cash-in release from the American Cleopatra label, which in no way approaches the sort of set that fans would appreciate.

This radio broadcast interview is actually a rich source of such information it was also mentioned during it that the band hoped to participate in a Greenpeace 'Anti-Sellafield' sampler - which, via the 'Stop Sellafield' concert appearance in 1992 and later video clip, came true.

A French interview from 1991 raised the prospect of a third single release from 'The Mix' in the form of 'Pocket Calculator', though it is difficult to judge just how substantial this possibility was, as in another interview Ralf was quoted as saying that a third single release from 'The Mix' may be 'Autobahn'.

The most recent example of a release that never was came at the tail end of 1994, when the German EMI-Electrola records release schedule revealed that an LP-length CD release of 'Tour De France' was scheduled for release on November 16th. When the release date came and went, further enquiries revealed that this had in fact been on and off the release schedule for some time previous to this time. Kraftwerk themselves appear to be the main instigators behind the release and the main instigators behind its continuing non-appearance! The CD is purported to contain a 30+ minute version of 'Tour De France'. Clumsy hoaxes towards the end of 1994 suggesting it was the first single release from 'The Mix 2' seem only to be clutching at straws. Every indication points that the CD would be a weird and wonderful release all of its own.

While not what could be classed a cancelled release, back in 1971, during the period when Ralf Hütter had left the band for a period of six months or so, the then line-up of Florian Schneider, Klaus Dinger and Michael Rother recorded about

35 minutes of material that remains unreleased. In an article entitled 'Genug Energie fürs Jahr 2000: La Düsseldorf's Neues Kraftwerk', printed in the German 'Sounds' magazine in 1979, journalist Ingeborg Schober reveals that *"...a colleague brought him [Michael Rother] to Kraftwerk: "They planned to do soundtracks" ... before they split up, they started to work on an album with Conny Plank. The tapes are still in the archive."* The material is reported as sounding much like Neu!. There seems little likelihood of it ever being released.

VIDEO'S, FILMS ETC.

One question never far away is when will Kraftwerk release a video, either live or a collection of promo clips. There is a strong rumour that a 'Live Mix' video appeared in 1991 in a very small number of promo copies but was sanctioned by Kraftwerk and hastily withdrawn.

There has also been comments in interviews from Ralf about the band compiling a video compilation, but again nothing with any substance in terms of the information given. Typical of such enquiries is this quote from Ralf, from the German 'Fachblatt Musik-Magazin' (5/1987); *"We have some film material. Sometime we will [...] release it on a video disc."* Again, the radio interview from late 1991 raised the subject, Ralf answering that *"we have a lot of video material. [...] Sometime, maybe next year, when we find the time, we have to look over it and then we might release it, together with additional films and computer graphics, maybe on a video disc. It will be a long process, but it will happen."*

The same radio interview touches slightly on the likelihood of the purported 'Live Mix' video, when Ralf is asked about whether any live recordings were made; *"We did live video recordings, but very, very few."* Unfortunately, I cannot clear up this little mystery at all.

Another such quote which is more mysterious is this one where Ralf reveals that the band obviously have some plans for a 'Tour De France' visual accompaniment. From the German magazine 'Keyboards' (5/1987), Ralf states *"To finish 'Electric Cafe', we've put back the work for the 'Tour de France' film"*. I have little other information related to this project, so details are scarce. Speculation suggests that, with Ralf's keen interest in cycling, it may have more to do with documenting past 'Tour De France' races, possibly focusing on past participants, in the way that the archive film the band use to accompany the live performance of the song does. But it is to be emphasised that this is just speculation. Even stranger, a German radio interview from 1991 when Ralf revealed that he had taken part in some medical 'research' by cycling while having his body's responses recorded by medical equipment, the readouts from this equipment being filmed. He is said to have mentioned that these films may possibly be released as part of a new version of the 'Tour De France' video. Again, nothing of substance, but there certainly seems to be something going on to do with 'Tour De France', especially if you take the cancelled CD release from 1994 into account.

Most mysterious of all is perhaps a film project that seemed to be on the cards at one point. In Paul Wilkinson's article 'A Dream Come True' back in issue 3, which detailed his encounter with Karl Bartos in 1989, the subject is raised;

Paul Wilkinson; 'What about the Kraftwerk movie - whatever happened to that?'

Karl Bartos; 'Well, a person called Karl Reinhart was making a movie about us, about our history, using footage and live footage but he died and we considered nobody else suitable for the position. Only he could do the film, so it was never completed and doesn't exist.'

Unfortunately, little else in the way of hard fact exists come to light on this film.

CANCELLED TV APPEARANCES

Kraftwerk's wariness of the media stretches back a long way and it seems that from an early time into their career, they were pulling the plug on scheduled TV appearances. The German magazine 'Musik-Joker' (25/1976) carried this short report; *"Kraftwerk [...] have specialised in breaking contracts. In October they've fooled the TV two times. A team [...] travelled to Paris, only to film their [...] concert and the gold disc award, but when the spotlight fell on the stage, the manager came and ordered: "Lights off! Camera away!" [...] After three hours waiting the group said only: "We're tired! We're not interested in an interview". [...] Even the almighty EMI was powerless. Similarly, another example ...*

Kraftwerk agreed to come to Baden-Baden for studio recordings for the "Info Show" [on October 18th, ...] but they didn't appear. Five days ago they came back from their European tour. TV and record company tried non-stop to contact [them ...], but without success. Editor Kramer: "Their families have them surely denied." Result: Record company and TV had (incurred) "thousands of DM costs" (Kramer), but (are left with) neither promotion nor broadcast material.

TOURS

Live appearances and the lack thereof again provide a rich source of cancelled activities. It appears that, in addition to their realised tours, Kraftwerk have intended to tour in 1978/79 (to promote 'The Man Machine'), 1983 (to promote 'Technopop'), 1987 (to promote 'Electric Cafe') autumn 1991 (in America, Canada and Japan, to promote 'The Mix') and more sporadic one-off events in the 90's. The degree to which the tours were finalised varies of course, but the bottom line is that none of these events took place.

It appears that Kraftwerk did not tour at all to promote 'The Man Machine'. They did take part in TV appearances and suchlike, with the aid of their mannequins. (Further details of this period can be found in issue 5's article 'Man Machine At Large'.) Interviewed in the German 'Musik-Express' Ralf is asked 'You wanted to tour in 1978. Why haven't you?', replying, somewhat vaguely, "Our work wasn't finished". There is no documentation about the band doing such a tour and no other reason to its non-appearance.

Some dates were announced for the 'Technopop'-era tour, an article in Electronics and Music Maker from May 1983 listed these dates; London Hammersmith Odeon, Thursday/Friday 16/17 June, London Lyceum, Sunday/Monday 19/20 June.

Numerous interviews from 1986/1987 mention that Kraftwerk planned to play live to promote 'Electric Cafe', England, Germany, Spain, America certainly. It is not known why Kraftwerk eventually scrapped these plans. No definite details emerged as to such a tour, other than Ralf stating, relevant to the country of the interview, that they would be touring soon. Interestingly, it seems that the modernised versions of the bands mannequins, with the motorised limbs, were in existence, as these are referred to in interviews. Once again, Ralf's answers were known to refer to the fact that the band had been busy at work modernising the Kling Klang equipment, in preparation for taking it out on the road to tour with again. Whether the lack of success generated by the 'Electric Cafe' album killed off the plans to play live or whether there were other reasons is unknown.

The original idea for the 1991 world tour was to play American and Canadian dates in the autumn of 1991 and indeed dates were announced and tickets went on sale. For whatever reason, these concerts were cancelled and remain unfulfilled. Similarly, projected dates in Japan never came around.

In the German radio interview from late 1991, Ralf mentioned the following; "I don't know exactly if it's possible, but we think about participating in some open air events in the summer. This is a technological problem, because our computers are very sensitive". Previous to this, it had been reported earlier in 1991 that Kraftwerk were to take part in a large scale concert in Paris along with 808 State and other techno artists in June of 1991 ('Frontpage' magazine (5/91)). It was not until March 1994 that such a theme reappeared when it was reported that the band were expected to play at an open air event, 'Experience', to take place at Lydd Airport in Kent, England on April 30th 1994. The event, which was publicised in the UK media, was eventually cancelled due to objections from local residents. Later reports stated that the band still hoped to play live in England in the summer, but nothing ever came of this.

Possibly the earliest example of a cancelled tour however, is from 1975, this report from the German magazine 'Fachblatt' (11/1975) revealing 'Kraftwerk were unlucky with their announced tour. All dates were cancelled. [...] The reason: lack of demand for tickets.' 1981 was of course Kraftwerk's most widely travelled period, but even then there were some cancellations; interviews reveal that the band had hoped to play live in the USSR and also East Germany, but it appears that such concerts did not take place.

There has also been speculation about Kraftwerk's involvement with a project to be based in Barcelona, Spain, other contributors being Brian Eno, Peter Gabriel and the like. This project was mentioned briefly in the 1991 Radio DT64 German language radio interview; "In two years we will maybe participate in a project in Barcelona. There will be a

permanent installation of our music, where we could do performances etc." A site in Barcelona is earmarked for this project but there has been no tangible progress of any significance, the project, something of a multimedia theme park judging by descriptions, remains largely a pipedream at present.

LIVE IDEAS

When it comes to actual live performance, Kraftwerk have, more than most, come up with some interesting ideas over the years. The most famous example is no doubt their idea of playing concerts in more than one city at a time, using various technological advancements, such as video projection or more advanced developments of their mannequins. 'Bravo' (36/1978) carried this quote from Ralf; *"We don't like touring, so we plan to do a really big thing: A European tour in at least twenty cities - at the same day, at the same hour! But of course we don't want to say now what will there happen with our dummies..."*. From 'Musik-Express' (4/1979); *"They plan to let the dummies play in future concerts, while they sit in the audience"*. The nearest these ideas have come to reality is in the bands use of their mannequins/robots during the live rendition of 'The Robots' in their 1981, 1991-1993 live performances. The opposite scenario, with the bands seated mannequins enjoying the show at their leisure, actually took place in 1978 at an Italian TV show shoot when the band performed 'The Robots', further details in issue 5's 'Man Machine At Large' article.

Another often spoken of project was the bands idea to one day devise an instrument that could be played by the movements of the body alone. Again, this reached a certain level, but not the full-blown realisation. The bands 1976 concerts featured a percussion instrument triggered by light beams. Ralf is quoted with the following in 'Musik-Express' (12/1976); *"The man in the UV-cage is only the prototype, we did this first during this tour, but we will go on with this concept of a Man Machine: to dance and to produce music by the movements of the body at the same time."* The reference to the man in the UV cage is further filled in by this description from a live review in 'NME' (16.10.76); *"They had a scaffolding which enabled first Wolfgang, then he and Karl, to stand aside making traffic cop signals and create the electronic rhythm section simply by their hand gestures breaking photo-electric beams connecting various parts of the structure. Their hands glowed blue and it was all a bit ridiculous except maybe on 'Radioactivity'".* Ridiculous?! I'm sure Jean-Michel Jarre would disagree with that, having got much mileage from this behaviour!

A 1976 interview in 'Melody Maker' also found both Ralf and Florian in almost garrulous mood on the subject. Ralf; *"Not (to) dance to existing music but through dance create the music, and the first step we have found in this direction has been from the drum kit through body movements to trigger the music. ...we have had some technical problems with it, if the light beams are not exactly aligned, but now we only trigger the percussive side of the music. Later we will find things out so we can play body melodies"*. An interview, of unknown origin but titled 'Tuning In With Kraftwerk', from the 'Radioactivity' era reveals more in the way of technicalities; Ralf once more; *"Through the use of photo-electric beams we set up a circuit which would operate a selection of cassette tapes when the beam was broken. By synchronising the rhythm on tape with the rhythm of a drummer's hand, say, an almost infinite variety of syncopations can be produced simply each time the drummer strikes a beat on his conventional drum kit. We patented this idea some time ago and have more recently been working with members of the Stuttgart Ballet Company on plans to stage a dance production which, through our light-triggered equipment, would play its own electronic music as a simultaneous accompaniment"*. Scrutiny of Stuttgart Ballet Company's event programmes has failed to reveal such an event taking place, although the vagueness of the project doesn't help the search at all.

Kraftwerk's equipment has always been a mixture of specially developed/customised technology. Even back in 1976 there is talk of an 'optical light disc' organ, to play melodies and rhythms. Presumably this may be the source of the slightly eerie sounds heard chiefly on 'Radioactivity' and 'Trans-Europe Express'. The idea that they may have produced such equipment for sale is a possibility raised in this quote from the German 'Sounds' magazine of 3/1977; *"Some of their instruments will be produced serially soon, so that people can do 'electronic housemusic' at their homes"*.

On a more light-hearted note; while not exactly a cancelled project, it is an interesting concept, worth bringing to light here; in an interview in 'Spex' magazine (4/1987) when asked if *"...you might release Kraftwerk products under a different name?"*, Ralf answers with the bizarre idea of a franchised Kraftwerk!; *"Yes, but we rather think about giving licenses; then there would be a Kraftwerk/England, a Kraftwerk/America and a Kraftwerk/Japan. But this isn't concrete yet"*.

To date, Pascal Bussy's biography of Kraftwerk is the only dedicated book written about Kraftwerk that is known of. However, back in 1990 the first such tome about Kraftwerk was planned. Called *'Die Mensch-Maschine'* and published by the German publishers Schirmel/Mosel Verlag it is described, in the official description from the publishers thus; *'This book is dedicated to the work of Kraftwerk [...]. It contains drafts, photos and the best stills from the commercially unavailable videos. The introduction was written by the [...] arts professor Otto Karl Werckmeister [...]. The book appears on the occasion of the new Kraftwerk world tour, which starts in November 1990.'* Neither the book or the November 1990 tour materialised, the reason unknown. The publishers do not have any plans for its release now.

Interviews with Ralf have again touched upon similar projects originated by the band themselves. There appears little substance to these, so there is no clue as to the form of the book. Again, an example of such a quote from Ralf, from 'Blick' newspaper (27.07.1991); *'When comes the book which was announced twelve years ago?' - "It's still not finished."*

It is known that Wolfgang Flür has been working on a book that details his days with Kraftwerk amongst other aspects of his life. Despite having been offered to various publishers, this remains unpublished as yet. It is to be hoped that such an 'inside' account of Kraftwerk will eventually appear in print and perhaps answer some of the mysteries raised by this article.

What can we draw from these observations then? Kraftwerk are well taken with the concept of their work taking more than music itself as its form. The band have always been as concerned with the overall presentation of the music, via videos, live performance, graphics etc. Such activities are no doubt more involved and more time-consuming than simply producing the music itself. Is it simply that they bite off more than they can chew with projected activities. Perhaps the fault is that the ideas are discussed, in interviews, too soon, before the complexities of the act have been thought through. Or, more simply, is it a case of a bit of playfulness from Ralf Hütter, seeing how much the journalist is willing to swallow?! It would be foolish to take every quote as gospel truth it seems, judging by the obvious non-appearance of so many mooted projects. The true nature probably lies somewhere in the middle and with more else besides. The most galling aspect of it all is of course the incredible dearth of tangible activity/produkt from the band; when the band achieved so much in the 70's and early 80's, the continuing silence from Kling Klang studio, punctuated only by the revision of old material, grows ever louder. Perhaps the news that EMI have been told by Kraftwerk to expect an album release in 1996 gives us something to look forward to and may answer our queries.

It all depends on which side of the argument you come down on; Kraftwerk may possibly be the first ever band to retire gracefully, while not terminating completely, an almost noble gesture in these times where ageing bands prostitute their muse, seemingly blind to their redundancy, never knowing when to call it a day. On the other hand, the obvious waste of talent that lies dormant, possibly from the fear of finding that you are no longer at the front of the pack is anathema to the likes of Brian Eno, who has profited as much from risk as strategy. Are these cancelled projects the signs of malaise or the evidence of risk? Unfortunately, a project such as 'Technopop'/'Electric Cafe' implies the former, that a band would spend the best part of four years refining a single album while so much around is changing. The fact that there is still such anticipation surrounding the prospect of new Kraftwerk produkt, despite the years of mere ticking over, suggests the latter; we all still keep the hope alive that Kraftwerk will end the years of self-imposed silence someday and release a genuinely 'new' record. Will it actually happen? Like most Kraftwerk matters, there's no easy answer, but plenty to ponder. □

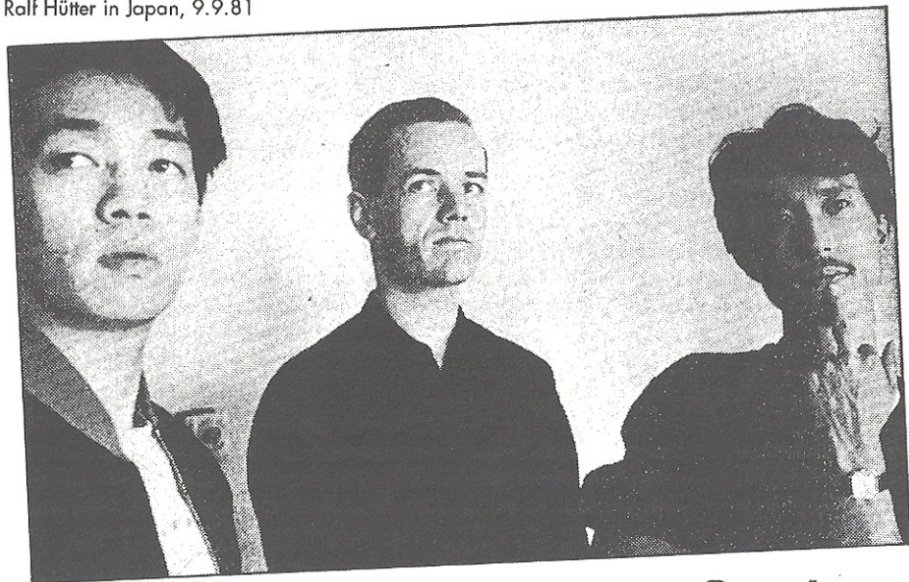
Written by Ian Calder with extensive information/translations from Klaus Zöpke.

Finally, Ralf was asked about any limitations Kraftwerk have and Ralf explains a little about their studio and how the track 'Pocket Calculator' came about; "...The only limitations that we have is really in our own mind or imagination, if we have no ideas then we don't know what to play and sometimes we just try to play in that mood also, then machines play themselves and we listen to what they have to say. Sometimes they play very nice segments and we leave them playing and even leave the studio sometimes and go to the cinema and then we come back it's still playing. We have changed in the meantime because we have done something else, we have seen a film or something and we have come back and we sometimes discover certain things that way..."

"Then last Christmas, by chance, we went through department stores in Düsseldorf and we seen those little calculators doing 'beep beep' and 'bleep blop' and we bought some of those and plugged them into our studio and ... suddenly we were standing there with those little "bleep bleep bleep" pocket calculators and we immediately wrote the song ... and immediately recorded it."

This interview, as with the 1978 Kent Ohio interview, was very interesting as well as enjoyable and finds Ralf in a more open disposition with the interviewer, less secretive. These interviews are well worth trying to find for any fans collection. □

Riichi Sakamoto and Yukihiro Takahashi of YMO meet
Ralf Hütter in Japan, 9.9.81



O u t r o

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Live – Norwich UEA, 17.6.92 – 'Homecomputer'

Photo: John Shilcock